THE FRAUDS OF ROMISH MONKS AND PRIESTS, SET FORTH In Eight LETTERS.

[Antoine Gavin]

Lately Written

By a Gentleman, in his Journy into ITALY;

And Publish'd for the Benefit of the Publick.

[Gabriel D'Emilliane]

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IMPRIMATUR,

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Epiſc. *Lond.* à Sacris.

Nov. 5.
1690.

TO THE

Right Honourable

THE

EARL

OF

NOTTINGHAM,

HIS

Majesties Principal Secretary of State, &c.

My Lord,

IT would be a great Presumption in me (who am a Stranger in this Country) to appear in

this Publick manner without the Protection of ſome Great Name. That of Your Lordſhips is deſervedly ſuch, ſeeing to the Greatneſs of Your Birth, You have added the higheſt Qualities of Wiſdom *and* Vertue, *and diſcharged the Publick Truſts of Your eminent Station, ſo much to the ſatisfaction of all good Men.*

I find (whereſoever I go) great Numbers of thoſe who highly Honour the Memory of Your Lordſhips Father, and ſpeak of him as of a Friend and an Ornament of the Church, a Pillar of the State, an Oracle of the Law,

Law, a Judge and Patron of Learning and Learned Men, an Encourager of Persons of Sound Principles and good **Lives**; *a Bountiful Support of those of our Country, who have fled hither for meer Conscience sake; and a Worthy Example of Sobriety, Justice, and Charity.*

Your **Lordship** *following so Excellent a Father with equal steps, I presume to make this my Humble Application to You, in behalf both of my Self, and of this Book, which with an honest Design I have Written and Published, resting secure under*

The Dedication.

Your Lordſhips Patronage, *and reſolving (by the Bleſſing of God) always to make good the Character of,*

My Lord,

Your Lordſhip's

Moſt Humble and

moſt obedient Servant,

G. D. E. E. A. P.

TO THE READER.

IT muſt be granted, That the Publick have been juſt in the kind Reception they have given to the LETTERS of Dr. *Burnet*, now the Right Reverend Biſhop of *Salisbury*, concerning his Voyage to *Italy*. The Truth of his Relations hath been own'd by all thoſe who have had the Curioſity to Viſit thoſe Countries, and given occaſion to the Learned, to make curious Reflections upon them. But above all I have obſerved; That the Paſſages he hath inſerted by the by (about ſome of their Religious Practices) have particularly pleaſed the *Engliſh* Nation, who (above all) abominate *Popery*. 'Tis this Conſideration at firſt, that begat a Deſire in me to publiſh many other Particulars on this Subject, eſpecially upon the Lives and Practices of *Romiſh Prieſts* and *Monks*, which

were known to me, as having been a *Secular Prieſt* of the ſame Church, and could not come ſo eaſily to the Knowledge of others.

The Reaſon why I was ſo Inquiſitive, is ſet down at the Beginning of my Firſt LETTER: I ſhall only add, That thoſe who are acquainted with the Spirit of *Rome*, will find no difficulty to believe the Matters of Fact here related, and much leſs to venture their Credit in denying them, ſince they are ſtill expos'd to Publick View; and as many as go thither may be ſo many Witneſſes of them.

If at any time I make uſe of ſome Expreſſions which may ſeem to have too much *Lightneſs* in them, I deſire my Reader to attribute this to the *Subject*; and to conſider, That as Serious Things ought not to be expreſt in a *Jocular Style*; ſo neither is it poſſible to utter Ridiculous Matters with a *Becoming Gravity*

Nor do I believe, That the *Papiſts* will have any reaſon to complain of me, as they commonly do of thoſe that leave them; ſaying, *That they make it their chief Buſineſs, to expoſe them without Bounds or Meaſure.* For the Teuth is, I have ſtill Matter enough

in

in ſtore, to fill another Volume as big as this, which might ſerve for a *Second Part*: But I chooſe to ſtop here, and give them an occaſion rather of Commending my Moderation, than of Complaining of my doing too much.

Laſtly, Foraſmuch as thoſe *Obſervations* made in my *Travels*, have much conduced to the Change of my *Religion*; ſo (I truſt in God) the Publication of them will have a good effect upon others, by Opening the Eyes of the People of the *Roman Church*; by Diſcouraging thoſe that Seduce them; and by putting *Proteſtants* upon Rendring hearty Thanks to God, for having delivered them from ſo miſerable a *Slavery*.

This (*Candid Reader*) is the principal Aim I had in Publiſhing this Book. *Farewel.*

G. D. E. E. A. P.

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THE

THE FRAUDS OF Romiſh MONKS AND PRIESTS, In Eight LETTERS.

The First LETTER, Of Relicks, &c.

YOU have not forgot, Sir, that in the laſt Converſation we had together in *France* upon the account of Religion, I made you acknowledge, That the *Proteſtant Religion* was more ſuitable to Reaſon, than the *Romiſh*, which you profeſs. It is true, that by an Evaſion more ſubtle than ſolid, you was pleaſed to call that Reaſon, *Human Reaſon*, ſupported by Senſe, which you ſaid, was the Rock on which the purity of Faith commonly ſplits and ſuffers Shipwreck;

and that you desired Faith to be the Foundation of your Religion, with exclusion of every thing else; and as you (with your Divines) freely owned an hundred several Miracles in Transubstantiation, you were pleased to tell me, That that was a Mystery of Faith, which ought rather to be humbly adored, than rashly pry'd into. Whereupon, when I took the liberty to tell you, That in the mean time, forasmuch as my Reason was given me by God, to make use of it in the searching out the Truth, I could not but think it hard, to reject the Light it offers, seeing that without it I was like one, who being fallen into a deep Water, and finding no bottom to foot upon, is drown'd and lost. You reply'd, That if I inclin'd to follow Reason, you would soon furnish me with Guides able to satisfie an honest Mind; and that I needed only to cast my Eye on so many Learned men, both Monks and Priests, who are the Light of the World, the main props and pillars of the Church, who by the Integrity of their Life, and the Purity of their Doctrin, uphold the Temple of God here upon Earth; That it was morally impossible, that so many Learned men should all of them be involved in Error; and that the agreeing Consent of so many excellent Spirits, appear'd to you a sufficiently firm Foundation to establish and fix a reasonable Mind. You proceed to speak to me with earnestness, of the Modesty that becomes those who have only a mean Capacity; which you know, I was so far from being offended at, that on the contrary, as being better than any

one

one elſe acquainted with my own Mediocrity, I thank'd you for your Advice; adding, That how uſeful otherwiſe it might be, yet ought it not to ſtop me in my ſearch after Truth. And foraſmuch as ſome time after, partly out of Devotion, and partly out of Curioſity, I hapned to undertake a Voyage into *Italy*, and upon that occaſion calling to mind, how in my Scruples about Religion you had referred me to your Prieſts and Monks, I made it my buſineſs, more than otherwiſe I would have done, to examin their Life and Conduct, to try whether I could find them a ſufficient and rational Foundation, as you pretend, to aſſure and confirm a perſon, who already began to doubt of the truth of your Principles. And it ſeems indeed, That God took a particular care, to diſpoſe all things towards my full and ſatisfactory Information herein, during the whole courſe of my Travels.

At my ſetting forth from *Paris*, I aſſociated my ſelf with a *Benedictin Monk* of a Reformed Congregation, a man of ſufficient Learning, and whoſe Wit and other good Qualities, had ſo far recommended him to the Religious of his Order, as to ſend him a ſecond time in quality of their Procurator, and Solicitor General, to the Court of *Rome*. His perſon and port were very advantageous, and he had a ſubtle Wit, very proper to humor the Cardinals, and to inſinuate himſelf with the Pope; and on this deſign it was, that he now undertook this Journy. We took our Way through the Country of *Brie*, and ſo through *Burgundy*; and upon the Road we called at ſeveral

Monaſteries of his Order, where we were received and treated very civilly; and where I had an opportunity of making ſome Obſervations, which I thought not unworthy of your knowledge; and therefore have made them the Subject of this LETTER; after which, I intend with the firſt occaſion, in caſe I find, Sir, that theſe prove welcom to you, to impart ſome other Matters I have obſerved ſince my entring into *Italy*.

We arrived the Thirteenth of *July*, at a little Town on the Confines of the Country of *Auxerre*, called *Flavigny*. It is a place of little conſideration at preſent, tho' very famous by reaſon of a Pilgrimage which has been continued there a long time ſince, in honour of a certain Sainteſs called *Reine*, and very infamous for the Conteſts and Impoſtures which were in their vigour when we paſſed that way. The Hiſtory in ſhort is this: An holy Woman, named *Reine*, ſuffered Martyrdom about *Aliſe*, a little Village a League diſtant from *Flavigny*; and the Ground of that Country generally abounding with Mineral Waters, ſome conſiderable time after the Monks of *Flavigny* made a ſearch for the Body of this Saint, and informed the people, That when ſhe was Beheaded, at the very place where her Head lighted on the ground, a Spring (known by Experience to be much conducing to the Healing of the Sick) bubbled up at that very inſtant, for a perpetual Miracle, in witneſs of Gods approbation of the Confeſſion of Faith made by his Handmaid. This Error being afterwards carried on for many Ages

in

in the minds of the people, and become the more incurable for its long ſtanding, it happned ſome years ſince, that the Fathers, *Cordeliers*, who are Religious of the Order of S. *Francis*, a ſort of people ſubtle and very crafty, obtained leave of the Biſhop of the place, to build a little Chappel about the ſaid Spring, whereof they took poſſeſſion, to the great regret of the Monks of the Order of S. *Bennet*, who had been all along the ancient and peaceable poſſeſſors of all the Relicks of S. *Reine*; who ſoon found how dangerous it was, to have ſuch ſly Fellows for their Neighbours; and the falſe Step they had made, in neglecting to make themſelves Maſters of a Spring of Water, ſo fruitful in Bleſſings, and which was not above a League diſtant from their Monaſtery. Indeed the *Cordeliers* knew much better to improve this Advantage, than the *Benedictins* had done; inſomuch that the Devotion very ſenſibly increaſed, in a ſhort time, to the conſiderable profit of theſe good Fellows, who not contenting themſelves with being the Maſters of the miraculous Spring, but reſolving to draw to themſelves the entire Devotion of that Pilgrimage, they pretended to have a conſiderable part of the Body of that Saint; and accordingly they expoſed to publick View, as they pretended, a whole Arm of her; by which means, within leſs than a Leagues ſpace, the monſtrous ſight was to be ſeen of a Saint with Three Arms, to the great aſtoniſhment and ſcandal of the people thereabouts, and of an infinite number of Travellers and Pilgrims, who reſort thither from all

Parts. Would to God that this Impoſture, as well as many others every whit as ſtrange, had the power to open the Eyes of thoſe poor People, to diſcover once for all, how theſe wretched Monks do abuſe them; how eaſily then would they perceive, that not only the Bones they adore are very uncertain, as reſting only on the Faith of perſons, who indeed have none at all; but beſides, that that Spring never was miraculous, but only an excellent Mineral Water, as may be gather'd from the nature of the Soil, and by the conſent of many Famous Naturaliſts and Phyſicians, who have learnedly treated on this Subject. I could, Sir, have heartily wiſh'd you preſent, when the Father (Guardian of that Convent) who took the pains himſelf to ſhew us the fair Buildings and Gardens, which were the product of the Monies brought in by that Devotion, entred upon the diſcourſe of his pretended Relick, which he had the impudence to ſhew us; for I aſſure my ſelf, you would have ſoon recover'd of the too favourable Opinion you have conceiv'd for this kind of men. He proteſted, not without an horrid Blaſphemy, That for his part, he did not more firmly believe the myſtery of the Holy Trinity, than he was convinc'd of the truth of his Relick; notwithſtanding that the Biſhop of the place had abſolutely forbid them, to expoſe it any more to publick View. It would be too ridiculous to give you a relation of the way and manner by which he aſſur'd us this Arm had been found by them, ſo far as to mingle with it the Revelations of his Brethren the *Cordeliers*, and the miniſtry

of

of Angels, which is the ordinary way made uſe of by the Church of *Rome*, for introducing and authorizing their Superſtitious Worſhip. The only Reflection I deſire you to make on this occaſion, is, That certainly it is a pitiful and lamentable thing, to ſee that the *Roman Catholicks*, who do not want Men of Wit and Parts amongſt them, are yet ſo obſtinate, that they will not be diſabus'd, notwithſtanding they ſee every day many things ſufficient to withdraw them from their Error: So that we have reaſon to believe, That by a juſt Judgment of God, becauſe they render to Saints and Sainteſſes a Worſhip that is only due to God, they are ſuffer'd to give the ſame to thoſe things, which in their own Conſciences do not deſerve it. The moſt part of their Divines maintain, That when a Devotion is once ſet on foot, notwithſtanding that the Subject in which it terminates ſhould be afterwards found to be falſe and ſuperſtitious, and ſo unworthy of ſuch Worſhip; yet that in Conſcience the courſe of it ought not to be ſtopt; Becauſe (ſay they) the Scandal which by this means muſt needs be occaſion'd, would be a much greater Evil, than that which we deſign to take away; and becauſe the Simplicity of a deluded people, whoſe intention is always right and pure, is much more pleaſing to God, than a too great cauteloufneſs and fear of being deceived, which might in the end engage them to call in queſtion all manner of Relicks and Miracles, which they look upon as a very great Evil. But the naked Truth is, This would give a great Stroak

towards the diminiſhing of their Temporal profits, there being never a Pilgrimage which does not afford them very conſiderable ones by the infinite number of Prayers and Maſſes, which are there procured, and are all rated at a very high price. I can give you on this Subject the reſult of a Conference, at which I was preſent my ſelf, ſome time ago, at *Blois* in *France*, upon occaſion of ſeveral Relicks kept in the Pariſh of S. *Victor*, two Leagues diſtant from that City. Theſe Relicks were much out of order, in old Wooden Caſes, all Worm-eaten and rotten with Age, which hindred them from being carried in Proceſſion, and expoſed to publick View. The concern therefore was to have them more modiſtily accommodated, and tranſported into new Caſes. To this end the Biſhop of *Chartres* was Petition'd to perform the Tranſlation, who preſently ſent his Order to the Archdeacon of *Blois* for that purpoſe; who aſſembled ſeveral of the Clergy, to conſult with the Curate and Prieſts of S. *Victor*, about the Precautions to be obſerved in that Tranſlation. The Reſolution was, That to avoid the Scandal that might happen, if nothing ſhould chance to be found in the Old Caſes, and to prevent the declining of the good Opinion and Devotion of the people, in caſe only ſome few Bones ſhould be found in them, the tranſportation of them into the New Ones ſhould not be done in publick, but as private as poſſibly might be, in the preſence only of ſome prudent Perſons, who might be ready to remedy all ſorts of Accidents upon occaſion: I was deſired by

by ſome Friends of the Archdeacon, to be preſent with them; and I can aſſure you, Sir, that the Reſolution was taken, if it ſhould chance that nothing were found in the Caſes, to maintain peremptorily, That the Bodies of the Saints were there whole and entire. And to allay ſomewhat the Scruples that might ſtart by occaſion of this proceeding, a Canon of S. *Saviours* Church of *Blois*, a Man reſolute and of ſmall Conſcience, maintain'd in the face of the Aſſembly, That no difficulty ought to be made of aſſerting ſuch a thing, tho' altogether falſe; that in a caſe where the Intereſt of the Church was concerned, all manner of Reſpects and Sentiments whatſoever, were to be ſacrificed and given up; that the Myſteries of the Catholicks were not to be expoſed to the Raillery of the Hereticks (ſo they call the *Proteſtants*) who would not fail to mock at them, as ſoon as they ſhould underſtand, that nothing had been found in the Caſes of S. *Victor*, which for ſo long a time had been the Object of the peoples Adoration; beſides, That the Devotion of Laicks, in aſſiſting the Clergy, was already ſo far cooled, that ſcarce any thing now was to be got from them, but by ſome pious Fraud, or holy Artifice. The Archdeacon heard all his Diſcourſe without contradicting him in the leaſt, and the Curate of the Pariſh, as being the perſon moſt concerned in the Caſe, very officiouſly returned him his moſt hearty Thanks. This done, they proceeded to the opening of the Caſes, and the truth is, Bones either of Saints, or no Saints, were found in them. In the

mean

mean time, a Monk of the Abby of S. *Lomer* in *Blois*, who was preſent, cried out at the very inſtant, that he ſmelt a very ſweet Odour which proceeded from them, wherewith he was ſo ſtrongly ſeized, that it was like to overcome him. A young Religious (his Campanion) ſeconded him immediately, and ſome Country People of the Pariſh proteſted the ſame thing. The Archdeacon and the reſt of the Company freely declared, that they ſmelt nothing: Yet foraſmuch as it might be that thoſe perſons having ſome more particular merit before God, he might think them worthy of receiving the like Favours; it was ordered that their Atteſtations ſhould be received, and ſet in the Margent of the Verbal Proceſs, which was then making of that Tranſlation, the Original whereof was to be ſhut up with the Relicks in the new Caſes. I had the Curioſity ſome weeks after, in the time of Vintage, to examin ſome of theſe perſons, about the Odour they pretended to have ſmelt, of what kind it was; whereupon ſome of them ſaid it was the ſcent of a Roſe, others of Jeſſamin, and others of a Violet: But finding that they faultered in their Expreſſions, and ſmiled withal, I took occaſion to preſs them more ſeriouſly, ſo that at the upſhot they confeſſed, that the good Opinion they had of the two Monks, which firſt ſtarted the matter, had drawn them in, and in a manner forced their imagination to make them believe that they ſmelt that, which they never ſmelt indeed. This ingenuous Confeſſion of theirs, made me to ſeek an opportunity to diſcourſe theſe two Monks: I went to

ſee

ſee the youngeſt of them, and after I had given him two or three Viſits of Civility, to increaſe our familiarity, I obtained leave of his Superior for him, to accompany me to a Country Houſe, where after friendly Entertainment given him, I put him upon the matter of the Relicks of S. *Victor*: The young Monk overcome by my Kindneſs, aſſured me he would open his heart to me, as to his own Brother; that the Truth was, he had not ſmelt any ſuch miraculous Odour, which he then atteſted, but that partly, that he might not contradict his companion, and partly by a ſudden ſhame that ſurprized him, leſt he ſhould not ſeem to be as much graced with Heavenly favours as his Brother, had made him to depoſe againſt his Conſcience, for which afterwards he was ſomewhat troubled. But, Father (ſaid I) how can you be at Peace, without unſaying again, what you ſo openly aver'd and depoſed, and this in Honour to Truth? The Devil is the Father of Lies, and you cannot pretend to the quality of a Child of God, without deſtroying the work of the Devil, whereof your ſelf have been the Inſtrument: He anſwered, That he had conſulted with his Superiors about the matter, and that the general Rule they had given him, to paſs over Scruples of that nature, was, to conſider whether the thing undertaken, or exerted into act, were oppoſite to the Glory of God, or the good and advantage of his Order: That it was not againſt the Glory of God, to advance the Honor of one of his Saints; eſpecially when ſome Circumſtances, that were both glorious and profitable to that Order, engaged the doing

doing of it; and that all the evil that could be ſuppoſed in the caſe came but to this, to ſay, That God had done what he might have done, and which he hath done on many other occaſions, which at the higheſt could be no more than a ſmall Venial Sin; as (they ſay) all Lies are, that do not infringe Juſtice, that is to ſay, that do no Body any harm. Having thus got this truth out of him; I had no more to do now, but to convince the old Monk, which it was not poſſible for me to do, for he continually perſiſted in aſſerting the truth of what he had depoſed, ay and much more; for he added, that the Odour had followed him every where, as long as the leaſt duſt of thoſe ſacred Relicks was left upon his Cloaths. In the mean time this did not hinder me from conſidering, that all the Credibility of this Miracle was now reduc'd to the Conſcience of one ſingle perſon; upon whom the affirmations of all the other Deponents reſted, and that whenever theſe Caſes ſhould chance again to be opened, in which the Verbal Proceſs was ſhut up (as Superſtition is uſed to get ſtrength by length of time) this Miracle would come to be believed with as much aſſurance, as a great many other moſt falſe and ridiculous ones are in the Church of *Rome*. I was the more willing, Sir, to repreſent this to your Conſideration, as being a thing which hapned in your Neighbourhood, and whereof you may fully inform your ſelf, whenſoever you pleaſe; that ſo finding the Faithfulneſs of my Relation in this particular, you may be the more diſpoſed to give Credit to what I ſhall Write to you concerning

Foreign

Foreign Countries. I return now to my Voyage.

From *Flavigny* we went to *Dijon*, the Metropolis of the Dutchy of *Burgundy*, where I was Eye-witneſs of a horrid Cheat, practiſed by the Men of the Church: I do not relate this paſſage to you ſo much for its own ſake, but to the end you may make a reflection upon it, of great importance to our preſent Subject. We took a walk to the Holy Chappel, where they ſhewed us many Relicks, that were indeed very ridiculous; and amongſt the reſt, that which they call the holy Hoſt or Wafer, from whence they tell us, Blood iſſued in great abundance, after that a Proteſtant had in ſeveral places ſtabbed it with a Knife; that upon his ſo doing the Wafer was chang'd into an Infant, and from an Infant to a Wafer again, as it was before. Whereupon entring into diſcourſe, we at laſt were inſenſibly led to this Queſtion, How it came to paſs, that at preſent there were not ſo many Miracles to be ſeen, as in former times? In anſwer to which the Canon, who ſhewed us the Relicks, told us, that in the Abby of S. *Benignus*, in the ſame City there were almoſt every day Miracles wrought, at an Altar of the Bleſſed Virgin, where Still-born Children were reſtored to life for ſome moments, till they could be made partakers of the Sacrament of Baptiſm; which was look'd upon as a very great happineſs for them, foraſmuch as according to the Opinion of the Church of *Rome*, Infants dying in that manner, cannot be ſaved by the Faith of their Parents, but go down to a dark place they call *Limbus*, which is made expreſs for them, and where

where they are to continue for ever, without ſuffering the puniſhment of Senſe, becauſe they have never ſinned by inducement of the Senſes; but where notwithſtanding they muſt undergo *Pœnam Damni*, or the puniſhment of Loſs, which conſiſts in the privation of the Beatifick Viſion, that being a puniſhment due to Original Sin. We cannot imagin, than any Fathers or Mothers ſhould be ſo pitileſs and unnatural, as rather to deſire to ſpare their Mony, than to reſcue their Children from ſo deplorable a condition, by having Prayers and Maſſes ſaid for them at the ſaid Altar: So that this was the Trade driven by the Religious of that Abby. We went therefore about 10 of the Clock in the morning to that Church, where we ſaw the miraculous Image of the Virgin, commonly called the *Little*, our Lady of S. *Benignus*, and two Still-born Children, who had already lain there two days, being black and livid, and very noiſom. The Parents who were of the beſt Families of *Dijon*, had (during theſe two days) procured above 200 Maſſes to be ſaid in that Church, at a Crown apiece, in order to obtain from God, by interceſſion of the ſaid Image, and by the Prayers of the Religious of that Abby, ſo much life for theſe poor Infants, as might be ſufficient for them, only to receive the Sacrament of Baptiſm. The Monks would very gladly have deferr'd their Reſurrection for a day longer, but the Bodies were already ſo far corrupted, that it was almoſt impoſſible to abide in the Church, by reaſon of the offenſiveneſs of the ſtench that came from them: So that as it hapned we came in the very nick

nick of time, to ſee the performance of it. Towards Noon, which was the time of the laſt Maſs, a young Fryer, who ſerved at the Altar, going to carry the Maſs-Book to that ſide where the Goſpel is read, hit with his Arm, either wittingly or by chance, the Table of the Altar, upon which the Still-born Infants were laid; which made them move. The Prieſt who was ſaying Maſs, and who probably was acquainted with the hour and moment of this interlude, immediately breaking off his ſacred Myſteries, (as the Papiſts pleaſe to expreſs it) pronounced with a loud Voice the Sacramental Words over the Infants, *Baptizo, &c.* caſting in the mean time on their Bodies the Water, wherewith he had waſhed his hands. At the ſame time, a great noiſe was raiſed in the Church, the People crying out, *A Miracle, a Miracle!* My Eyes could not deceive me, in a caſe I had ſo plainly diſcerned, and I could with all my heart have undertaken to undeceive the poor People; but that I knew how dangerous it is, to oppoſe the blind Rabble, kept and entertained in Error, by Prieſts and Monks, who knowing no other God, but their own Intereſt, would ſoon have ſtir'd them up, under the pretence of Hereſie or Incredulity, to have torn me to pieces. However, I could not refrain from hinting a Word of it in particular to ſome perſons, who were preſent at that Action, and who owned they had obſerved the ſame thing. *Burgundy* was always a Country fruitful in Superſtition, and we may ſee the ſigns of it every where; and conſequently alſo, there be very few Countries where the Prieſts and

Monks

Monks thrive better, or more abound in Riches. I beg of you now, Sir, only to make this Obſervation, that the Fathers of the Abby, are the Reformed Religious of the Order of S. *Bennet*, and conſequently of a Congregation, which you in *France* have the greateſt Veneration for, as well upon the account of their Learning, as Duty; both which, as you have told me, render them equally recommendable: If then, ſay I, theſe Men, who are ſo Holy and ſo Virtuous in your Opinion, are ſo able and cunning to deceive, and ſuch profligate lovers of outward gain; what may we not expect from ſo many Non-reformed Religious, who live ſo licentiouſly and looſly to the very Eye, as to make open profeſſion of Trapanning Laymen, by a Thouſand kind of Artifices, to have wherewith to maintain their flagitious and ſcandalous Debaucheries? We ſtay'd ſome days at *Dijon*; where I was Eye-witneſs to an abundance of ridiculous Devotions, that are in Vogue there; and which it would be too tedious to relate to you; as that of our Lady of *l'Eſtan*, that of S. *Bernard*, and of the Image of the Virgin kept at *Talent*, and pretended to have been painted by S. *Luke*, and to be very Miraculous. But foraſmuch as the Devotion paid to theſe ſorts of Images, is uſed to increaſe or decreaſe, according as the Prieſts or Monks do more or leſs dexterouſly manage them; this laſt-mentioned has ſuffered very much, being well nigh fallen into contempt, inſomuch as the Curate of that Pariſh, deſpaired almoſt of ever bringing it into requeſt again. To bring this about, he told us, he knew but one way, which was

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to publiſh a Miracle which lately hapned about that Image, which was a more remarkable one than all the Cures it daily performed. The Caſe is this, ſaid he, having perceived about ten years ago, that the Devotion to the Image daily decreaſed; I began to enquire into the cauſe of it, and finding the Picture to be in a very rueful condition, by reaſon of the moiſtneſs of the place, which had well nigh rotted the Cloth, and the Rats alſo having made bold with ſome part of it, and extreamly disfigured the Face eſpecially; I conceived that this might be the reaſon of the abatement of the Peoples Devotion. Wherefore to remedy this, I made the old Cloth to be paſted upon a new one, and ſent for one of the beſt Painters of *Dijon* to draw over the defective places of it, which was accordingly done with a great deal of care and exactneſs; and on a firſt Sunday of the Month, the Image thus drawn over and imbelliſhed, was ſet up in its former place with a great deal of Solemnity, and a great concourſe of people. Since which time, proceeded he, I have been continually troubled with the Gout; and moreover, the Bleſſed Virgin to ſhew her ſelf diſpleaſed, that any Painter ſhould be ſo bold as to put his hand to a piece of Work which her Servant S. *Luke* had left to Poſterity, in order to the reſtoring of it to its firſt luſtre; ſhe has ſome days ſince made the Colours that had been ſuperadded to it, to ſcale away and fall down, and thereby reduced the Image to the pitiful eſtate it was in before; which however ſhe is much more pleaſed with, than to ſee her Pourtraiture profaned

with ſtrange colours. He added, that he had already cauſed the Relation of the Miracle to be printed, and that he did intend to ſend Copies of it to all Neighbouring, yea even into Foreign Countries; and that he lookt upon this as a probable way, to recal the Devotion of people to his Church. I had occaſion, Sir, to remind my ſelf of this paſſage, during my *Italian* Voyage; for being at *Bononia*, they ſhewed me an excellent piece of Caratche in *Freſce*, upon the Walls of the Cloyſter of the Abby of S. *Michael* in *Boſco*; which being extreamly injur'd by all-devouring Time, had moved the compaſſion of *Gudo Rkin*, another famous *Italian* Painter, who ſo dexterouſly mended the defects thereof, as in a manner to reſtore it to its former Beauty; But yet we find that the new paint, laid upon the firſt colours, falls down in ſcales, and that without a Miracle too; there being nothing more natural and obvious, than that new colours, cannot ſo well incorporate with old paint, as freſh colours do with one another. But notwithſtanding the Obviouſneſs hereof, when Superſtition has once gained the aſcendent of a Man's Spirit, ſhe doth ſo ſtrangely prepoſſeſs the ſame, that there is nothing ſo common and ordinary, but appears to them miraculous. I have ſeen ſeveral other Images of the Bleſſed Virgin in *Italy*, which they ſay were all painted by the ſame S. *Luke*, and are conſequently reputed miraculous, particularly that of S. *Mary* the greater in *Rome*; but in truth they are ſo very different from one another that it is impoſſible they ſhould have been painted by the ſame hand, or that all

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of them ſhou'd be the Pictures of the Bleſſed Virgin, the Lineaments, Figure and Proportions of the Face and Body, vaſtly varying from one another. I ſhall give you a more particular account of them, in my obſervations of *Italy*. For the preſent, becauſe we have not yet quit *Dijon*, I will only relate to you what I was Eye-witneſs of my ſelf, in the ſame Abby of S. *Benignus*, belonging to the Reformed *Benedictin* Monks, where is kept the miraculous Image of the Bleſſed Virgin, that brings Still-born Children to Life again, as we have already mentioned. I went to viſit one of my Brothers, who is a Religious of that Abby, and as I was walking with him in the Garden after Dinner, another Religious came running towards us in great haſte, and told my Brother in his Ear, that he ſhould immediately repair to the Church, to ſee ſomething well worth his Curioſity; and foraſmuch as I was then in my Brothers Company, and well enough known to the Fathers, I followed them to the Church. The buſineſs was this, The Prior, accompanied with ſeven or eight of his Monks, was about to uncover an old Crucifix, which was kept in a very fair Chappel, which thence was called the Chappel of the Miraculous Crucifix, and had for Forty years been covered with a Vail of black Velvet; The Story tells us, that a Religious of that Abby, ſaying his Prayer one Evening before that Crucifix, the Image of Jeſus Chriſt, which was faſtned to it, ſpake to him, and ſaid; *My dear Brother, Cover me that I may no more ſee the Iniquities of my People, and let*

no man from henceforwards be ſo bold to uncover me, to behold my face. This Monk preſently performed the Charge laid upon him, by adviſeing his Abbot and Brethren thereof, who were not wanting immediately to carry the News throughout the whole City, which occaſioned that great Devotion which continues ſtill to this day. There is a vaſt Concourſe of People to this Crucifix, eſpecially on *Fridays*, but more particularly on *Good Friday*, when the whole City goes in Proceſſion to the Image to worſhip it, and pay to it the ſame Honour as they would to Jeſus Chriſt himſelf. Now the Prior of this Monaſtery, who was an old Stander, and well verſed in Monaſtick Intriegues, was not much ſcared at this threatning of the Crucifix, being reſolved, coſt what it would, to ſatisfie his Curioſity about it; as he alſo did, and in this Reſolution he was fain to put his hand to the Work himſelf, ſome of his Monks having abſolutely refuſed to do it, expreſſing themſelves extreamly frighted at his undertaking, ſaying, That ſhould they offer to touch it, they could expect no leſs than to be conſumed with fire from Heaven. But the Prior not concerned at their Apprehenſions, with a wonderful Courage uncovers the myſterious and dreadful Machin. I could not but laugh to my ſelf, to ſee the poſture of the Monks that were preſent: Some of them betook themſelves to their Heels, declaring they would not by their preſence make themſelves partakers of ſo horrid an attempt and ſacriledge; others ſhut their Eyes, that they might not be dazled and ſtruck blind with the Majeſty

Majeſty of the Crucifix, *Ne opprimerentur à gloriâ, Scrutatores Majeſtatis*; and others proſtrated themſelves with their Faces on the Ground, that they might be ſeen by their Divine Maſter, as they ſaid themſelves, in that moſt profound act of Adoration and Self-abaſement. There were ſcarce any that kept ſtanding, beſides my Brother and I; we were very near to the Prior of the Monaſtery, who was very buſie with uncovering the Crucifix, and who beginning himſelf to be frighted, or at leaſt pretending to be ſo, began to repeat the 51*ſt Pſalm*, *Miſerere meî Deus*. But as it hapned, neither the one nor the other had any great cauſe to fear; for when the Velvet Covering was taken off, they found nothing but a Linnen Bag, with ſome bits of rotten Wood in it, which were the Remains of that dreaded and adored Crucifix. Amongſt theſe mouldred Fragments we had much ado to diſtinguiſh the Head, where was the miraculous Mouth that had ſpoke to the Monk. In a word, it was in a pitiful ſtate, being all rotten and Worm-eaten, without either Form or Figure, full of dead Flies and Spiders: Inſomuch that the good Monks that were preſent being ſomewhat recovered from their Fright, and perceiving no ſuch Glory as they had prefigured to themſelves, began to diſcourſe amongſt themſelves, how to reconcile their Story with the preſent diſcovery; that is, the condition wherein they found the Crucifix, with their Tradition, concerning the Revelation and Diſcourſe of the Crucifix with the Religious: For if it were true, that it had never been uncovered, ſince the

time of its ſpeaking, when it was yet fixt to the Croſs, how could it be, that at preſent they found it in a Thouſand pieces, and in a Bag? The Superiour concluded very wiſely, that it was probable that this Crucifix had of old been had in great Veneration, and thereby been of great advantage to the Monaſtery, and that this Monk by inadvertency or otherwiſe, had let it fall, and broke it to pieces, and fearing to be ſeverely puniſhed by his Abbot therefore, had gathered up the pieces into a Bag, and having faſtned them again to the Croſs, and covered them with that piece of black Velvet, had afterwards forged and publiſhed that his pretended Revelation. However, foraſmuch as he knew nothing of certainty concerning the matter, he choſe rather to ſuſpend his Judgment, than to paſs a raſh one concerning it; and beſides that, according to their general Principles, the Devotion being already fixed, he would by no means be a hinderance to ſo many good works as were performed on that occaſion, nor put a ſtop to the courſe of ſo many Maſſes and Prayers as were daily procur'd to be ſaid in the Chappel of the Miraculous Crucifix. So he pack'd up all again, and put it in the ſame order as he had found it, which may ſtill be ſeen, in caſe they will permit the viewing of it, in the ſaid Chappel, where the Devotion continues as great as ever. If the Roman Catholick Biſhops were a little better ſtocked with true Zeal for the Glory of God, or at leaſt for the honour of their own party, they would without doubt more ſeriouſly apply themſelves to the

the examining of the different Devotions that are in vogue in their Dioceſes. I am well aſſured they would find a great deal of downright impiety, covered under the Mask of Devotion. But ſo far are they from this, that they are the firſt to authorize and encourage them by the Indulgences they give from time to time, to the Churches and Chappels where theſe Devotions are entertained; and accordingly we find that great abundance of them have been granted by the Biſhops of *Langres* to thoſe who ſhall ſay five *Pater Noſters*, and as many *Ave Maries* in this Chappel of the Miraculous Crucifix, in the Abby of S. *Benignus* of *Dijon*. Before I have done with this City, Sir, I muſt not forget to entertain you a while with a famous neſt of Monks four Leagues diſtant from it, I mean the great and famous of Abby of *Citeaux*, the Abbot of which, as you know, is the Chief and General of the whole Order, which is without doubt one of the vaſteſt Bodies of Religious, the Church of *Rome* can boaſt of; *France*, *Italy*, *Spain*, *Poland* and *Portugal* being thronged with the Monaſteries of that Order, who all of them own this Abby of the *Citeaux* for their Mother. I had very particular acquaintance with the Prior of the Monaſtery, who was a young man of the City of *Orleans*, who invited me to come and ſee him. The Abbot ſent two of his Coaches, with ſix Horſes, to fetch ſome of his Relations, whom he had invited to dine with him, and with whom I had the honour to joyn my ſelf. All the diſcourſe we had on the way from *Dijon* thither, was about the Tra-

gical end of Monſieur *Bourré*, a Gentleman born of one of the moſt Noble Families of *Dijon*, and a Religious of that Order, who a little before had been publickly executed at *Dijon* for poiſoning his Abbot, becauſe he went about to make an enquiry into his Crimes; the Fact being evident that he had debauched ſome of the Nuns of a Monaſtery, whither the Abbot had ſent him in quality of their Director or Confeſſor. As ſoon as we were come near to the *Citeaux*, I could not but admire the ſtately Avenues of that magnificent Abby. This place which formerly was nothing but a horrid Wilderneſs, when S. *Robert* the firſt Abbot of that Order, did inſtitute it, is now at preſent by the Voluptuouſneſs and Luxury of the Monks, become an Earthly Paradiſe, abounding with all manner of delights. The Hiſtory tells us that that Abbot, being a lover of Silence and Solitude, retired himſelf, with ſome of his Diſciples into theſe parts, which at that time was nothing elſe, but a thick Wood, and lying out of the way of almoſt all human Converſe. Here it was they began to build themſelves Cells, with the Branches of Trees; and ſome amongſt them digged themſelves Caves underground, without either Art or Form, like to the Dens of Ravenous Beaſts. The Herbs and Roots that grew in the Wood, ſerved them indifferently, without diſtinguiſhing the good from the bad, for Nouriſhment; and all the precaution they uſed was this, that after they had boild them, they firſt gave ſome of them to a Dog, or other domeſtick Animal, which if it did not immediately dye,

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or appear'd diſtempered, they took it for granted, that there were no poiſonous Herbs in their Cookery, whoſe dangerous effects they had reaſon to apprehend. But how prodigious a change appeared in that place not long after! The People round about being informed of the aſtoniſhing Severities, and ſtrange way of living of theſe *Anchorites*, came flocking from all parts to admire them, and returning to their homes, publiſhed every where that in the Wood *de Citeaux*, they had in their days ſeen ſomewhat more and greater than either *Elias* or S. *John the Baptiſt*. And as in that Age of the World people were much more compaſſionate and tender than they are at preſent towards perſons, who for the love of God, as they expreſt it, had left all, they made it their buſineſs, from all parts to carry them not only Food, but other Conveniences of Life. Theſe good Hermits contented themſelves for ſome time, to accept of ſome of the courſeſt and meaneſt of their Supplies; and afterwards by little and little the moſt exquiſite and delicate, receiving them as by an expreſs Order from God, by attributing to themſelves the promiſe of Jeſus Chriſt made to his Apoſtles, that having forſaken all for his ſake, they ſhould receive in this World an hundred fold, and in the World to come Eternal Life. Thus within a ſhort time, from a Life of extraordinary rigour and abſtinence, and moſt ſignal and remarkable Piety, they chopt about, to a Life as Scandalous and Diſſolute; and whereof S. *Bernard* in his time began already highly to complain, but at preſent is advanced to a far more tranſcendent degree of exceſs.

ceſs. Inſtead of a Deſert and Solitude, as it was before in the higheſt degree, they have now made it a kind of a City; which within its compaſs entertains all manner of Handicrafts-men, who live there with their Wives and all their Families: Inſtead of that mean and ſpare Diet, to which they were obliged by a Solemn Vow, made at the foot of their Altars, and in particular of abſtaining from Fleſh all the days of their Life, they have at preſent, directly contrary to their Vows, introduc'd the uſe of it to the higheſt degree of Delicacy, as being always accompanied with the agreeable Variety of *Herbs* and *Fiſh*. And, for my part, I can truly aver, that for the Two days that I ſtaid there, their Table (beſides their common Viands) were covered with ſeveral Diſhes of Veniſon, followed by a Service of Fiſh, the ſides of the Diſhes being garniſh'd with the Tongues and Roes of *Carps*, and the Tails of *Crabs*. Yea, the Abbot had ſent to *Diep*, which is above an Hundred and twenty Leagues diſtant, at an exceſſive Charge, and by a Poſt ſent Expreſs, who ran day and night for *Soles*, which were freſh enough, and ſo coſtly a Rarity, that the Intendants and Preſidents of the Parliament of *Dijon*, durſt not venture upon them in their moſt ſumptuous Entertainmants. The Monks of this Abby, in the mean time, glorying in this Exceſs, which ought rather to have confounded them, vaunted with an unparallel'd Impudence, That in all that Province there was not a man beſides the Abbot of *Citeaux*, who could bear ſuch an Expence, and continue it every day. After Dinner, the Abbot (followed

(followed by many of his Officers, and a great number of Lacqueys in Livery) went himſelf to ſhew us the New Buildings he was then making in his Abby, and which conſiſted in four great Piles of Building, of a magnificent Structure, all of hewn Stone of a Diamond-Cut, deſign'd for the ſeparate Lodging of the four principal Abbots of the Order, with all their Train, at the time of their general Chapters. A fifth Building, which he intended for his own perſon, was a lofty Palace, lifting up its proud Head above the other four Buildings, as it were to overlook and command them, to repreſent the Authority he had over the other Abbots, in quality of their General. After we had taken a view of theſe magnificent Structures, we were led into the Old Buildings. Here it was that a fair Opportunity was given me, to take notice of the Subtilty and Artifices of the Monks, ſtill to continue Laicks, if poſſible, in the high eſteem of their Monaſtery and Perſons. In order whereunto they ſhew to thoſe who viſit them, a great quantity of Relicks, and places of Devotion, as they call them; upon their entring into which they uſe frequent bowings of their Bodies, and kneelings, repeating ſome Prayers, beſides ſome geſts and cutting of Faces, wherein they oblige the Company to imitate them. This done, they fill your Ears with the recital of Old Stories and Miracles of the Days of Yore, wrought in favour of their Order. Amongſt which, they never forget to inculcate the Tragedy of ſome Uſurper of the Revenues of their Monaſtery, or of ſome other that ſpoke ill of the ſame, who at the upſhot of the Story doth never

never fail of being ſtruck from God with ſudden Death by a Thunderbolt, or of having his Neck broke by ſome Devil or other. I have ſince obſerved the ſame inveigling Tricks in almoſt all the Monaſteries and Convents of *Italy*, and in all other places frequented upon the ſcore of Devotion. They ſhewed us a large Refectory of the firſt Religious of their Order, which is a vaulted Room, and very long, more reſembling a hideous Cave, than a place to eat in. And yet (ſaid one of the Religious) this is that holy *Grotto* where our Ancient Fathers, the bleſſed Founders of our Order, met together every day after Sun-ſet, wearied with their Handy-labour, after having ſung the Praiſes of God, to partake together of a piece of black courſe Bread, with ſome boild Pulſe or Roots, without either Salt or Butter, or any other Sawce or Dreſſings, and in ſo ſmall a quantity, as deſigning rather to keep themſelves from ſtarving than to make them ſtrong and lively; and continually practiſing thoſe ſevere Mortifications, which we can ſooner admire than imitate. Theſe great and heroick Saints are now in Heaven, and have changed their aſtoniſhing Severities, with the Eternal delights of the Wedding Supper of the Lamb; and 'tis from that high Station, they with a favourable Eye look down upon thoſe who Live, or have lived for ſome time in this Monaſtery, as likewiſe upon thoſe who are or have been Benefactors to it; and we are aſſured by Revelation, that none of them, nay, tho' they may have lived a moſt abominable life, ſhall ever die in mortal ſin. A Counſellor of *Dijon*, who was there preſent

ſent with us, ſaid ſmiling, That he wanted but very little of being perſuaded to leave all he had to the Monaſtery, and gently puſhing my Arm, ask'd me, Whether I was not well pleaſed to hear a fat and burly Monk, after having ſo well dined, diſcourſing of the Abſtinence and Penance of thoſe Ancient Fathers, and of the Bleſſings God hath in ſtore for his Abby too upon their account, with ſo much energy? But after all, the plain truth is, That it is nothing but an Artifice they make uſe of, to ſtrike the Spirits of men with ſome kind of Veneration for their Orders and Perſons. From this place they led us to another, which they call the *Old Chapter-Houſe*, which is a Building after the *Gothic* way, with many Rows of Pillars like a Church, yet ſtately enough. The Stones of the Pavement are cut into Letters, which make up all the *Pſalms* of *David*; and near the midſt of this place they ſhewed us a large Stone, on which of old they were uſed to lay the Religious of the Monaſtery ſome hours before their Departure, where they were expoſed all naked upon Aſhes and an Hair-Cloth, until they breath'd their laſt. But this Cuſtom (ſaid the Father) has ſince been aboliſhed, becauſe it was found by Experience, that ſome of thoſe who were ſo expoſed, having more ſtrength left than was imagined, continued ſometimes in that condition, expoſed to the violence of Cold for Twenty four hours, or more, before they died; ſo as thoſe who thus expoſed them, queſtion'd, whether in ſo doing they had not been their

their Murtherers. At the preſent (ſaid he ſmiling) the Caſe is alter'd, and we die ſoftly on the Feathers, after having eſſay'd whatſoever the Art of Medicine can afford for our Recovery, and which is every whit as meritorious to us, as that pitileſs rigour our Predeceſſors were oblig'd to, foraſmuch as herein we ſubmit our Wills to thoſe who command us, and whom we are obliged to obey; Obedience even in pleaſing and agreeable things, being more acceptable to God than all Sacrifices. Thus gallantly the Father excuſed the Decay of their Obſervance, endeavouring to make that ſeem a Vertue, which indeed is nothing elſe but an effect of their Softneſs and Effeminacy. Or rather, we may ſay, That by a juſt Judgment of God, theſe kind of men having raſhly vowed, what was not in their power to perform, are fallen by ſo much lower, by how much they aſpir'd to flie higher. 'Tis upon this account that we ſee ſo many Reformations of theſe Religious Orders, and ſoon after other Reformations of them again, who in a ſhort time will ſtand in need ſtill of another Reformation. But that which is the ſtrangeſt thing of all is, That they fall into prodigious Corruptions, and into thoſe habits of ſinning, which ſtrike the moſt worldly men that are, with horrour, as may be ſeen from the hint I gave of Monſieur *Bourré*, Monk of that Order, and many other Examples, that fill the World with their Report.

There is but one only Religious Order in the Church of *Rome*, that can boaſt of its Antiquity, and of having never been Reformed, which is that

that of the *Chartreux*. Having ſtayed two days at *Citeaux*, we took our way through *Lionnois*, and *Dauphiné*, and finding our ſelves not far from the Monaſtery called the *Great Chartreux*, our Curioſity invited us to take a view of it. This Monaſtery is the Chief Head of all thoſe of the Order of *Chartreux*, and in it their General Chapters are held. St. *Bruno*, who was the Founder of this Order, retir'd hither with his Companions in the Year of our Lord 1080. What is commonly related as the Reaſon of his Retirement, is rather a Fable than an Hiſtory; which notwithſtanding is maintain'd by a great deal of heat, as a great Truth by the Fathers of this Order, who have caus'd the Story to be painted at large, and hung up in their Cloiſters; but on the other hand, it is denied by the Doctors of the famous Univerſity of *Paris*. This Fable tell us, That *Bruno*, who had a long time frequented that Univerſity, being preſent at the Interment of a Doctor, who had been a Member of the ſame; a perſon of an irreproachable Life, to outward view, and who died with the odour of Sanctity; when the Office for the Dead was reciting in the Church for him, and that they were come to thoſe Words of the Leſſons, *Reſponde mihi, quantas habeo iniquitates*; *Anſwer me, How many Sins I have*; the Dead Body raiſed himſelf on the Bier, and ſitting upright, with a terrible Voice pronounced theſe Words, *Accuſatus ſum*; *I am Accuſed*: At which aſtoniſhing Accident, when all that were preſent were extreamly amazed, it was thought fit to put

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off the Obſequies till the next day; at which time they began again the Office for the Dead, and when they were come to the ſame Words, *Reſponde mihi, &c.* the Dead anſwered with a Tone much more terrible than at firſt, theſe two Words more, *Judicatus ſum*; *I am judged*; which increaſing the horrour and amazement of all thoſe that were preſent, made them reſolve to delay the Burial one day longer; at which time a vaſt Crowd of People being aſſembled, the Office was begun again, and at the ſame Words the Dead raiſing himſelf the third and laſt time, ſaid with a pitiful and mournful Accent, *Condemnatus ſum*; that he was Condemned to Hell without Recovery. This ſo ſtrange and terrible a Spectacle (ſaith the Fable) had that effect on the Spirit of *Bruno*, that from that inſtant he reſolved to quit the World, and to retire into ſome Solitary place, for to live there wholly to God, ſolitary and ſeparate from the view of the World; and by his perſuaſion, engaged ſeven Students of the Univerſity of *Paris*, his Companions, with him in the ſame Reſolution; who being all of one mind, went and caſt themſelves at the Feet of the Biſhop of *Grenoble*, to beg of him the Deſert called *Chartreuſe*, which belonged to him; and having obtained their Requeſt, they retired there, and built themſelves Cells. The Truth of the matter is, that this Saint did indeed retire with his Companions into this place; but all the Story of the Doctor is evidently falſe, as has been inconteſtably proved by the Doctors of the Univerſity of *Paris*; there-

there being none of the Contemporary Writers, or any that were Two Hundred Years after, that make the leaſt mention of it; and is indeed nothing elſe but an Invention of the Papiſts, very fit to be joyned with the reſt of their Stories, concerning the Apparitions of Souls in Purgatory. Probably, Sir, your Curioſity will incline you to deſire, I ſhould give you a diſcription of this Place, and its Situation, which without doubt is the moſt Deſert place Nature could form; and yet notwithſtanding is at this day become a very pleaſant Seat, by means of the immenſe Expences which theſe Fathers, who are extreamly rich, have been at, to make it more pleaſing to Senſe. Wherefore, Sir, I ſhall endeavour, in order to your Satisfaction, to ſet down what comes to my Mind concerning it. This Deſert, called *Chartreuſe*, which has given the Name to the Order that is thence denominated, is a place ſituate in the Boſom of an exceeding high Mountain, the Top of which parts it ſelf into Four others, leaving in the midſt of them a place of a Mile in length, and above a Quarter of a Mile in breadth, in which ſpace the Cells of theſe Fathers are built. The Waters guſhing forth from theſe Mountains, make a moſt impetuous Torrent, which bears the Name of S. *Lawrence*. This was a place altogether unfrequented, and almoſt inacceſſible, when S. *Bruno* firſt retired thither, tho' at preſent, by a vaſt profuſion of Mony, the Religious of the place have made the acceſs to it not only eaſie, but pleaſant, having cut out large Steps in the Rock, and by that means made (as it were)

many Stairs to get up to it. However, ſuch is the ſituation of the place, that neither Coaches nor Carts, no nor Horſes neither, can come up to it; but they make uſe of Mules, accuſtomed from their Youth to go up and down thoſe Steps, to convey their Proviſions to them. We got up to the place by means of the ſame Conveniences, and found the Snow in ſeveral places lying ſtill on the Eminences of the Rocks, notwithſtanding that it was in the midſt of *Auguſt*; and that at the Foot of the Mountain, the Heat was almoſt inſupportable. The Building of the Monaſtery was not yet quite finiſhed when we arrived there, having been reduc'd to Aſhes ſome ſhort time before. There was a Suſpicion, that the Religious themſelves had been the Incendiaries, becauſe their Cells diſpleaſed them, as being too mean and Old-faſhion'd; and beſides, too much pinch'd of room, ſo that they could not enjoy themſelves in them with that eaſe and convenience they deſired. It hapned at a time when the Wind extreamly favour'd their deſign, and the Fire began in a Quarter where ſo much Combuſtible matter was lodged, and ſo far from the places where any Fires were made, that it was eaſie to judge, That it was not a thing hapned by accident, but contrived on purpoſe. Beſides, the delays and indifferency ſhewed in quenching of it, gave a ſufficient Teſtimony, That the Fryers deſired nothing more, than to ſee it (with all expedition) burnt down to the ground. Yea, ſome have averred it for a certain Truth, That the News of it was known many days before in Forein Countries, which was related

related to us by one of the Fathers of that Society for a Miracle; saying, That without doubt the Tutelary Angel of the place, foreseeing what was to happen to it, had communicated the knowledge of it to so far distant Countries. But not to insist on this any longer, certain it is, that the whole Building was reduc'd to Ashes, and in less than six Months, in a manner quite Rebuilt again; a good part of the Materials having been prepared before-hand, and as it were by a divine Providence, as the said Father exprest himself, in places adjacent to the Mountain. It is to be noted, That their General Chapter having some Veneration for those Ancient Buildings of their First-Fathers, and to prevent Lay-men from Taxing them with Niceness and Luxury, had refused them their permission to Build. But what is capable to restrain the Longing of Monks, when as by direct or indirect means, by Hook or by Crook, they are in a condition to effectuate it? In a word, These New Buildings were brought to perfection, with a Magnificence very unbeseeming the Modesty of Hermits, and more becoming the Palace of a King, than the Cells of such who pretend to have forsaken the World. There remain'd only one Building at the Foot of the Mountain yet unfinished, being design'd for the Officers of the *Chartreuse*, and which was already far advanced. As for their manner of Living, I must acknowledge they still retain something of their first Institution, as in particular their abstinence from *Flesh*; but the diversity and abundance of *Fish*, *Herbs*, *Eggs*, and other such like things where-

with they are ſerved, is far more pleaſing and agreeable to Senſe, than any ſort of Fleſh-meat, and much more coſtly. The Father-Purveyor of the Houſe aſſured us, that the Expence of every Religious amounted at the leaſt to Five hundred Crowns a year. They have a way of extracting the Subſtance, and as it were the Quinteſſence from ſeveral great Fiſhes, whereof they make Jelly-Broths, that are extreamly nouriſhing. Their Bread is of an extraordinary Whiteneſs, and the beſt Wine that can be got for Love or Mony, is afforded them without meaſure. Beſides this, every Religious has in his own Apartment a Reſervatory, ſtor'd with Fruit and other Neceſſaries, ſo that they may eat and drink whenever they pleaſe, and entertain their Friends that come to Viſit them, to charm the irkſomneſs of their Solitude. Some amongſt them, who are of a melancholy Temperament, are ſo immerſed in their Solitude, that they abhor all manner of Converſation, and will not ſo much as ſpeak to their Superiours: This is no Vertue, but rather a Savage-humor, that has got the Aſcendent over them, and makes them almoſt inſupportable to themſelves, and like *Timon* the *Athenian*, they conceive an hatred againſt all Mankind. The greateſt part of theſe, in proceſs of time, become diſtracted, loſing the uſe of their Underſtanding and Reaſon; and accordingly they have built for theſe a very fair Apartment. Every *Chartreux* has his ſeparate Apartment, which conſiſts of five or ſix fair Rooms, very neatly furniſh'd and adorn'd, with a neat Garden, which ſeparates one Apartment from another; all which Gardens

dens have a Door that opens into the Cloiſter, which is of a prodigious length, and of a moſt ſumptuous and magnificent Structure, inſomuch as it doth not ſeem ſo much contrived for the Convenience of the ſeveral Cells, as for the imbelliſhment and ornament of the Place. The great company of Strangers, who come thither from all parts, either out of Curioſity or Devotion, ſome about buſineſs, others to Viſit ſome of their Friends or Kindred, has chang'd this Solitude into a place of great Concourſe, and conſequently made it appear leſs hideous to Nature; and particularly in Summer-time many Perſons of Quality retire thither, there to enjoy the deliciouſneſs of the place, and the cool Air of the Mountain. Theſe Fathers, to engage the frequent Viſits of others, and to draw thither their Kindred and Friends, have eſtabliſhed Hoſpitality in this their Monaſtery, and entertain every one that comes, according to his Quality, both Perſon and Attendants, without coſting them a Farthing; and a man may ſtay there many days, according as they find his Company either pleaſing or profitable. At the firſt they had alſo ſome reſpect for the Poor; but at preſent, if thoſe who come there be not men of Faſhion, and in good order, they are neglected and contemn'd. That part where they entertain Strangers, is a moſt ſtately and ſumptuous Building, containing Apartments for perſons of Quality of all Ranks and Degrees. The Chief Officer of the Kitchin knows what kind of Entertainment is ſuitable to each Chamber, which is very exactly obſerved. By this we may gueſs at the immenſe Riches of theſe Fathers.

You would be aſtoniſhed, Sir, to ſee theſe *Anchorets*, whoſe firſt Inſtitutor, S. *Bruno*, ſhewed himſelf to be ſo great a lover of *Poverty*, *Retirement*, and *Silence*, are now by ſucceſſion of Times, mounted to ſo high a degree of Riches and Grandeur, and ſo ardently deſirous to change their Deſert, of it ſelf ſo ſolitary and inacceſſible, into a well inhabited Country, and more frequented, than the great Roads that lead to great and Capital Cities. They boaſt, that they have never been Reformed ſince their firſt Inſtitution; but in good earneſt, Sir, think you not after all this, that they ſtand in need of a Sound Reformation? We may conclude from hence, That all thoſe great Efforts which are made to ſurmount Nature, which cannot ſubſiſt without a moſt particular Grace and aſſiſtance from God, which he vouchſafes to whom it pleaſeth him, when we will unadviſedly appropriate the ſame, and raſhly make profeſſion of them, and tye our ſelves up to them by Vows, do commonly end in ſhameful Weakneſſes; which diſcovers, that they were rather Artifices of the Devil, to lift up the Heart of Man, in order to his greater fall, than the Motions of Grace, which are wont to humble and abaſe the Soul, in order to give it the Victory over the World, the Fleſh, and the Devil. After this, as it were to caſt Duſt in our Eyes, and to divert us from making any Reflection upon ſuch extravagant Diſorders, they led us to the Chappel of S. *Bruno*, which is not above a Quarter of a Mile diſtant from the Monaſtery, upon the top of a Rock, ſurrounded with many Fir-Trees. They told us, that this formerly had been his Cell,

and

and that a Spring of moſt Clearer-Water we ſaw there, had been miraculouſly obtain'd by his Prayers, which reſtored many ſick perſons to their health, and though drunk to exceſs, was never known to hurt any. The *Benedictin* Fryer, who was my Companion in the Voyage, drunk a great quantity of it by way of Devotion, but was much incommoded thereby in coming down from the Mountain; which, that he might derogate nothing from the Miracle, he attributed to the cold and pent-in Air of the Rocks. This Father aſſured me often, whilſt we were there, That he felt his Soul pierced with an Extraordinary Devotion, and a great Senſe of the Preſence of God; and demanded of me, Whether I was not ſenſible of the ſame thing? I anſwered, That I was; but withal, that in all this I did not believe any thing to be more than what was very Common; it being very natural for *Grotto's*, Dark-places, cloſe and ſhady Foreſts, vaſt Caverns, and the Sources of Fountains and Rivers, to produce the ſame effect in us; and not only ſo, but that we often experience, when we are alone by Night in great Buildings, Chappels, or Churches, that our Soule are moved with a kind of Horrour, which calls God to our Remembrance, as I have often found by Experience in my Travels. And ſome few days after, as I paſs'd the *Alpes*, which are very high Mountains, in Company of this *Benedictin*, when we were come to a place which was very Solitary, I obliged him to take notice, Whether it were not indeed ſo as I had ſaid? Whereupon he ingenuouſly acknowledged, That he found himſelf no leſs moved, than he had

been at the great *Chartreuſe*. Nevertheleſs, theſe Fathers make all Strangers, that frequent this place, to take notice of it as a ſpecial Bleſſing of God, vouchſafed to this place by the Interceſſion and Merits of S. *Bruno*. It is an aſtoniſhing thing to ſee, That thoſe Effects, which God as the Author of Nature works in us, are for the moſt part by thoſe of the Communion of *Rome* aſcribed to God, as the Author of Grace, and Worker of Miracles in their behalf. So true it is, That it is a very pleaſing thing, and extreamly flattering the Pride of Man, to believe, That God thinks us worthy to be exempted from the Common-way, that he may favour us in a more peculiar manner, not ſticking every moment (for our ſakes) to countermand the Natural Courſe of things here below, by Prodigies and miraculous Operations. We came down from this Monaſtery, by a very Narrow-way between Rocks, for the ſpace of near two Leagues, having on our left Hand the Torrent of S. *Lawrence*, which precipitates it ſelf with a horrid Noiſe from the Top of the Mountain to the Bottom of it, where is ſituate the Town of S. *Lawrence*, from whence it borrows its Name. All the Neighbouring Country many Leagues about, belongs to the Religious of this Monaſtery, and every where are ſeen ſtately piles of Building, and Houſes of Pleaſure, which they have cauſed to be built, with Pools and Ponds full of all ſorts of rare Fiſh, to pleaſe their Palats. We afterwards continued our Way towards *Savoy*, and paſſed the *Alpes* by the Way of *Montſenis*; from whence we came down into *Piedmont*, to a little Town

Town called *Suſe*. Here, Sir, I intend to ſtop, and ſhall conclude this Letter with this laſt Reflection, which I would deſire you to make; which is, That the Church of *Rome* is ſo far from having any Cauſe, to pride her ſelf in her Religious Orders, and of which ſhe boaſts ſo much, as far excelling the *Proteſtant Church*, which has wholly excluded them, ought rather upon that account to be humbled; yea, to bluſh for ſhame; ſeeing it is evident, That this ſort of Men, under the ſpecious pretexts of Devotion, Silence, and Retirement, endeavour nothing elſe, but to acquire themſelves a great Eſteem in the Minds of people, that by this means, they may turn them which way they pleaſe; and Experience makes it appear, That all this is done for their Temporal Advantage. They begin with the Spirit in appearance, but always palpably end in the Fleſh. I have made ſome other more curious Diſcoveries during my Voyage in *Italy*, which I ſhall be very willing to communicate to you, in caſe I find you are not offended with this my Firſt LETTER; but that you have received it with the ſame Spirit of Charity and Zeal, which I ſhall always preſerve for the Spiritual Good of ſo dear a perſon; as being, Sir,

Your, &c.

The

The Second LETTER,

Of the Spirit of Revenge in the Romiſh Clergy, &c.

SIR,

FOraſmuch as there is nothing, the Church of *Rome* more ſtrictly forbids her Children, next to the Reading of the Scriptures, than the peruſing of thoſe Writings, which diſcover the Lives and Doctrin of her Paſtors, whom it is her will they ſhould follow Blind-fold, without examining either what they ſay or do; I had ſome fear for my firſt Letter, leſt it might have given offence, becauſe it made ſome diſcoveries to you of their Conduct. But ſeeing the kind welcome you afforded it, I hope that the Reflection you have made upon it, and the good inclination you expreſs, in declaring your willingneſs to be further informed by me on this Subject, may at length conduce to the opening of your Eyes, to ſee the dangerous condition you are in. And ſeeing I deſire nothing more, than to ſerve as an inſtrument to produce ſo good an effect; I ſhall gladly continue, Sir, to communicate the Obſervations I have made, during my Travels, about matters of Religion.

Being

Being arrived at *Suſa*, a ſmall Town of *Piedmont* in *Italy*, and ſubject to the Duke of *Savoy*, we were told that the Body of S. *Maurus* Abbot and firſt Diſciple of S. *Bennet*, repoſed in one of the Churches of this place. And foraſmuch as the Father, that was my Companion in my Travels, was a Reformed Benedictin, of the Congregation of S. *Maurus* in *France*; I asked him whether he woule not go to pay his duty to that Relique of his Bleſſed Founder? But he very freely told me, that he would take heed of doing ſo, adding that the *Italians* were great Cheats, who pretended to have all the Saints of Paradiſe in their Country, whereas indeed there was nothing more falſe; for-as much as the Body of S. *Maurus*, was preſerved whole and entire, in one of their Abbies in *France*. And moreover aſſured me that the Bodies of S. *Bennet*, and S. *Scholaſtica* were there likewiſe, the one in the ſmall Town of S. *Bennet* on the River *Loire* near *Orleans*, and the other at *Mans*; notwithſtanding the *Italians* conteſted with them about all theſe Reliques, and a vaſt number of others, of moſt authentick Authority; and that upon no other ground, but that of the Popes Bulls, which they have procur'd, ſaid he, by ſome artifice or other, for this purpoſe, and which declare them to be true and lawful poſſeſſors of theſe Reliques, tho' clear contrary to all Evidence drawn from Hiſtory and Tradition. But Father, ſaid I, do you remember the diſcourſe you held two days ago, as we paſſed the *Alpes*, to prove the Pope's Infallibility, which you extended with ſo much heat and earneſtneſs, not only

to

to matters of Right, but alſo to matters of Fact? The queſtion then put was this, how the Popes could grant ſuch thundring Bulls, fraught with Excommunications and Anathemas againſt thoſe who do not believe, that the Houſe of *Loretto*, was Tranſported from the Holy Land by Angels, to that part of *Italy*, where it is ſuppoſed to ſtand at preſent; as likewiſe againſt thoſe who ſhould deny, that a great Mountain near to the City of *Cajeta* in the Kingdom of *Naples*, which is open at the Top, and as it were ſplit in two, was one of thoſe Rocks, that were Rent at the Paſſion of our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt? You then affirmed that the Pope on all ſuch occaſions, was aſſiſted with an Infallible Direction from the Holy Ghoſt; and conſequently, that it was impoſſible for him to be deceived himſelf, or to deceive others, any more than in matters of Faith it ſelf; and more eſpecially yet, in a caſe of giving Religious Worſhip to ſome object of Devotion, as that is, which is given to the Houſe of *Loretto*, and to the Holy Mountain; and how then can you now ſay, Father, with reſpect to your S. *Maurus* and S. *Bennet*, or any other whatſoever, that thoſe Popes, who declar'd againſt you in favour of the *Italians*, have been miſtaken? Is not this a caſe of Worſhip, as well as that of *Loretto*? The Party was but viſible, and the good Father muſt needs have entangled himſelf in a moſt troubleſome contradiction: Wherefore to avoid the ſhame and confuſion that thence would have followed, he choſe rather to turn his anſwer into a piece of Raillery, ſaying, he confeſſed that he was indeed a very bad politician

politician, becauſe when he was on the *Alpes* he ſpake like an *Italian*, but that at preſent he ſpoke as a *Frenchman*. Becauſe it is true, that the People of *Italy*, eſpecially thoſe of the Popes Territories, do own the Popes Infallibility in matters of fact, which the greateſt part of the Romon Catholicks of *France* do deny. This diſtinction of ſpeaking as an *Italian*, or as a *Frenchman* was indeed very frivolous; and intruth if it were permitted to utter ones opinion, ſometimes according to the humor of one Country, and ſometime of another, if our *Benedictin* had ſpoken like a *German* or an *Hungarian*, he would have reduced the Papal Authority to a very low Ebb: for I have obſerved in my Travels, that theſe People, tho' for the moſt part they profeſs the Romiſh Religion, yet have this advantage that they believe little of it. Without doubt, Sir, it would much better have become him, to have ſpoken as a Chriſtian ought to do, *viz.* Like a good and honeſt man, with a ſincere and unbyaſſed Spirit, ſtrengthened by Grace, ſupported by Reaſon, and grounded upon the Holy Scripture; for then would he never have attributed the title of Infallible to a mortal man upon Earth, which belongs to God alone. I was ready to give him my thoughts to this purpoſe, but I called to mind that I was got into *Italy*, where one only word might drag me before the cruel and mercileſs Tribunal of the Inquiſition, and therefore thought it more wiſdom to hold my Peace. However I could not but make this reflection on theſe proceedings of the Religious, that in caſes wherein the Prieſts or Monks find their advantage,

advantage, or in things altogether indifferent to them, they are not wanting with open Mouth to publiſh the Popes Infallibility; but when his Infallibility ſeems in the leaſt to claſh with their intereſts, he is no more than an ignorant and miſtaken man, who may be bubbled as well as any other. From *Suſa* we came to *Turin*, which is a very fine City, ſituate upon the Banks of the River *Po*, and the Court of the Dukes of *Savoy*. Here it was that a dawning of the Beauty of the Churches of *Italy*, preſented it ſelf to our Eyes: The greateſt part of the Pariſh-Churches, Monaſteries and Convents are very ſumptuouſly built, and moſt Richly adorned within. Nothing is ſeen in them, but Marble, Porphyry, Jaſper Stones, and moſt exquiſite Guilding and Painting. The Croſſes, the Candleſticks, Lamps, Statues, and Caſes of the Relicks are all of Gold and Silver, and almoſt infinite in number and value. Some good French Prieſts, who had joyned themſelves with us, to take a view of the Churches, were in a ſtrange rapture at ſo dazling a ſight, and being inwardly moved to ſee ſo many Temples of the Lord, ſo gloriouſly adorn'd, wept for joy: For as in their Journy from *France*, they had taken their way through *Geneva*, and the *Swiſs Cantons*, where they had ſeen the Proteſtant Churches, devoid almoſt of all material Embelliſhments, they from thence concluded, (how truly I leave you to judge) that there was no other true Religion, beſides that of the Church of *Rome*, whoſe zeal for the Houſe of God, was an evident Witneſs of the truth of her Faith. I told them that this their concluſion

cluſion ſeemed to me to be built upon very weak Principles, and that where we had a mind to prove the truth of any Religion, the Grandeur and Riches of the World were too weak premiſes to ſupport a concluſion; and that for my part, if I were to form a preſumptive Argument in favour of any Religion, I ſhould ſooner take it from the good life and manners of thoſe that profeſs it, than from the ſumptuous Ornaments of their Churches. They ſhewed us the Church Treaſury, where is preſerved the holy Shrowd or Sheet, and ſoon after the Canons and Prieſts entred the Quire, to Sing their Veſpers and Complins which are the Evening Prayers of the Church of *Rome*. They entred without any order and very undecently, talking and laughing together, and puſhing one anothers Elbows. The firſt come, without expecting till the reſt were ſeated in their places, began to ſing the Office: and that which might well have laſted an hour and half, in caſe it had been ſaid with the required Pauſes devoutly and modeſtly, as it is practiſed in the Common Prayer of the Church of *England*; was diſpatched in leſs than a quarter of an hour, with a ſtrange kind of precipitation, ſo that it was ſcarcely poſſible to diſtinguiſh between one word and another, or between the end and beginning of the Verſes. In truth, Sir, were it lawful to judge of the Conſciences of men, from any thing that is outward, I might have had good reaſon to infer from their behaviour, that their Hearts were much ſtranged from the words of their Lips, and their Lips and their Hearts yet further from God.

They

They did not much weary our Patience with hearing them; and the Service being thus roundly diſpatched, they rather fled, than went out of Church, every one his own way. The Father that was with me, perceiving that I was Scandalized at it, told me, as having had ſome former experience of *Italy*, by a Journy he had before made through it; that it was not yet time for me to be offended, and that the nearer I ſhould appear to *Rome*, the more cauſe I ſhould find for it. I had been told indeed, that the further I went, the more ſtately Churches I ſhould find, and the more richly adorned: So that joyning theſe two together, I concluded, that all this outward Bravery and Ornament, did not proceed from the piety or zeal of the Clergy of *Italy* for the Houſe of God; becauſe they neglected the chief Glory and Embelliſhment of it, *viz.* the inward, and that ſomething elſe muſt be the Motive to it, as I diſcovered afterwards, and of which I ſhall give you a more particular account upon another occaſion. After we had viſited the Churches, towards Evening, we went to view the great *Piazza* of *Turin*, facing the Palace of his Royal Highneſs. Here we ſaw many Theaters or Stages of Rope-Dancers, and Mountebanks, wherewith the Market Places of the Cities in *Italy* are always well provided, for the Satisfaction of the Publick. But that which ſurprized me moſt was, that the greateſt part of thoſe that aſſiſted as Auditors and Spectators about thoſe Theaters, were either Prieſts or Monks, who clapped their hands in Applauſe of the moſt Ridiculous and Scandalous ſtuff they produced, and laughed with

with all their might. We ſaw there of all ſorts of Orders, ſome Father-Jeſuits; that ſeemed the moſt concern'd for theſe Fopperies, ſaluted the Father *Benedictin* that was with us; and having underſtood that he was Procurator General of the Order, they offered him an Eminent place, near unto themſelves, which he accepted of. For my part, I was unwilling to engage my ſelf in the concern, and retired with the two French Prieſts to our Inn. We had an opportunity the ſame Evening of diſcourſing with Count *Zamberti*, an Officer of his Royal Highneſs, whom formerly I had ſeen in *France*, and we could not keep our ſelves from acquainting him how ſtrangely we had been ſurprized, to ſee ſo many Religious at the public Shews, and ſo attentive to the lewd Fooleries of *Buffoons*, becauſe we looked upon it, as very unworthy and ſcandalous, and that no ſuch thing was to be ſeen in *France*. He told us, that this was not that which ought moſt of all to ſurprize us, for that in *Italy*, thoſe of the Clergy who did commonly frequent the *Piazza* in the Evening, were the moſt eſteemed of, as being ordinarily the beſt amongſt them; becauſe the reſt at the ſame time were for the moſt part either in Whore-Houſes, or at Taverns, in company of their Wenches. Here I turned my ſelf to our French Prieſts, and ſaid, Well Gentlemen, what ſay you now? Do you think you concluded well from the Magnificence of the Churches of this Country, that their Religion and Piety muſt needs be the beſt, becauſe their Churches were the moſt ſtately and ſumptuous? whereas you ſee that theſe who ought

in a more eſpecial manner, to be the living Temples of the Holy Ghoſt, abandon themſelves to ſuch execrable Profaneneſs and Debauchery? As to that which we alledged, that no ſuch lewd deportments were to be found amongſt our Eccleſiaſticks in *France*, the Count very wiſely replied, That for that we might thank the Proteſtants, for that it was only their preſence that maintained the Learning, Modeſty, and reſerved-Carriage of the Clergy of the *Gallican* Church, and if they once ſhould be forced to quit the Country, (for the Kings deſign was already known here) we ſhould ſoon ſee all Sciences and Vertues exil'd with them. This, Sir, agrees incomparably well with what ſome perſons of Quality of the Roman Communion have of late freely owned to me, That they begin already in *France* to perceive, that ſince the Proteſtants have been baniſhed thence, and that they believed them far enough from them; the burning Zeal of the Eccleſiaſticks is turn'd to Lukewarmneſs, their Devotion grown cold, and their application to their Studies, become very flat and languiſhing. So that at preſent they are ſeldom found at their Books, but for the moſt part Ranging from one Houſe to another, upon pretence of encouraging and confirming their new Perverts, and boaſting themſelves for great Doctors, with what they have learnt, at a time when they were forced upon by the learned Writings, and cloſe Arguings of the Proteſtant Miniſters. I return now to my Voyage; but before I leave *Turin*, becauſe I have already made mention of the Church, wherein is kept the

the Holy Shrowd or Linnen-ſheet, wherein they pretend our Saviours dead Body was wrapt; I ſuppoſe you will not take it amiſs, if I tell you in ſhort what I think of it. They of your Religion ſuppoſe it to be the ſame Shrowd or Linnen-ſheet, in which *Joſeph* of *Arimathea* wrapt up and buried the precious Body of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, after that it was taken down from the Croſs, and that the Figure of that adorable Body remains Miraculouſly imprinted upon it, for the Comfort of Believers. I intend not to enter the Liſts about the truth of that Hiſtory, which I never ſearched into; but I ſhall only tell you, Sir, that there is another of them to be ſeen in the Cathedral of *Beſançon* in *Burgundy*, which they maintain to be the ſame in which *Joſeph* wrapt the Body of our Saviour: Several Popes, according to their diſtinct fancies and humors, have granted ſeveral Bulls and Indulgences, ſome to that of *Turin*, others to that of *Beſançon*, until that theſe Conteſtations raiſed ſuch extream Feuds between the Archbiſhops of theſe two Cities, that at laſt they fell to Libelling one another; whereupon, to ſtifle the flame from ſpreading further, a way was found out at *Rome*, to reconcile them, by determining (contrary to the expreſs words of the Vulgar Tranſlation, *Matth.* 27. *& involvit illud Sindone mundâ, and wrapped it in a clean Linnen-cloth*; where the word *Sindone* is in the Singular Number,) that there were two, and conſeqnently that both the one and the other of them were true. It cannot indeed be denied, but that there was ſuch a Shrowd or Linnen-cloth, and it is poſſible that

with great care it might have been preſerved till now; but to ſee the Church of *Rome*, for the reconciling of two Biſhops, with ſo much eaſineſs, boldly to determine that there were two, when the Scripture ſeems but to ſpeak of one, this is that which will not go down with men of underſtanding: And moreover to ordain, that the ſame Worſhip and Adoration be given to them both on *Eaſter-day*, which is given to the Croſs on *Good-Friday*, which does not differ at all from what is given to Jeſus Chriſt himſelf: This is no leſs than downright Impiety and Idolatry.

After ſome days ſtay at *Turin*, finding my ſelf within two days Journy of *Genoua*, the curioſity of ſeeing that Lofty City, made me reſolve to go thither. However, I found ſome ſtrife in my ſelf about it, becauſe of the Satisfaction I had enjoy'd in the Company of my *Benedictin*, whoſe Converſation was indeed very pleaſant and agreeable; as finding, that if I continued my Reſolution, it would be neceſſary for us to part; for the Letter of Obedience, which he had ſhewed me of his General, expreſſed, that he was without ſtop or ſtay to go directly to *Rome*. I communicated to him my Reſolution of going to *Genoua*, whereupon he immediately told me, that he was reſolved to go along with me, and that he would order the matter ſo, as his Superiors ſhould know nothing of it, and accordingly in the Letter he wrote to them from *Turin*, acquainting them, that being not yet wholly recovered from ſome fits of an Ague he had had, he ſhould be obliged to remain there

ſtill

ſtill for ſome days, which was juſt the very Time he took, to go this Journy with me. I found by this that the moſt reformed Monks, make no great ſcruple of Violating the Obedience they have Vowed to obſerve, and to tranſgreſs the Rules they profeſs, upon the leaſt occaſion that preſents it ſelf to them, of any particular ſatisfaction. The uſe of Meat was alſo forbid him by his Rule, and yet he no ſooner found himſelf at a diſtance from the Monaſteries of his Order, but he made bold with it; and as ſoon as he met with another, he took up his obſervance again, as before, deſiring me not to divulge that ever he had Tranſgreſſed it. And in the mean time, I can ſay with truth, that I never ſaw a more Rigorous Cenſor of another mans actions than he was, when he was in the company of Monks, who were not Reformed, or who took more liberty than thoſe of their Congregation; he would undertake them in a high manner, yea, with Inſolence it ſelf: He ſaid, he could not look upon them any better than damn'd Souls, and worſe than Devils. Neither had he any more charitable Opinion, for the People, whom the Monks, by way of diſtinction, term the People of the World, and Worldlings, with which words they denote all Laymen in general. It ſeem'd to him impoſſible for a man that liv'd at large in the World, to be ſaved, except he took up, and confin'd himſelf to a Convent; yea, and it muſt be in a Convent of his Order too. If by chance he ſaw in the Streets a Woman well dreſſed, without examining whether her Condition, or ſome other rea-

ſon might oblige her to it, he immediately pronounced a Sentence of Eternal Condemnation againſt her; ſaying, That ſhe was a Victim deſtin'd to the Flames of Hell; and if he heard ſpeak of any perſons newly married, or that had obtained ſome good Fortune, Alas (ſaid he) theſe perſons make their Paradice of this World, but they ſhall burn for ever in the other for it. And thus without excepting any whatſoever, and putting a wrong conſtruction upon the moſt innocent Actions, he judged with an inveteracy of heart, what belongs alone to God to judge of. What I now ſay, is not only to be underſtood of this Religious alone, but generally almoſt of all ſorts of Reformed Religious, or thoſe who profeſs a more ſtrict life than others; and of ſecular Prieſts alſo, who by their little Superſtitious ways, pretend to be quite diſtinguiſhed from the Common ſort of People: I have obſerved, that they judge men without Mercy. Some have owned to me, that from their youth up they have been accuſtomed to theſe Idea's, the World having been always repreſented to them as a Tempeſtuous and raging Sea, whence it is very rare for any one to eſcape, without being Shipwreck'd, and that their Monaſteries are the very Ports of Salvation and the Havens of Grace, where it is impoſſible to periſh. Whereas it were much better, to educate them in a Spirit of Humility, and to inſpire them with charitable Thoughts towards their Neighbour, whether they be joyned with them in the ſame profeſſion of Life, or ingaged in another way, to which we ought Chriſtian-like to believe that

that God hath called them. This indeed we muſt own, that it ſeems to be the unhappy Let of all Perſons whatſoever, that engage themſelves in a party, not to have any conſideration but for thoſe of their own company, deſpiſing and condemning all the reſt. It was this conſideration without doubt, that made our Fathers, the firſt Reformers of Religion to diſapprove, and afterwards to reject all theſe kind of inequalities, which by dividing men into ſeveral different States, do ordinarily divide their Hearts alſo, and by this means ſeparate them from the Charity of Jeſus Chriſt. But to return to our *Benedictin*, who as he was extreamly Rigorous to others, ſo was he as Indulgent to himſelf. He was naturally very Comical, and inclined to Raillery, and did not affect that Monkiſh Gravity, but upon certain occaſions.

We arrived at *Genoua* the 1*ſt* of *September*. Being informed that there was a very fair Abby of his Order in the City, called S.*Catharine* of *Genoua*, he would needs go and Lodge there, in hopes of being as well Entertain'd, as he had been hitherto in the ſeveral Monaſteries he had called at. He went and preſented his Letter of Obedience to the Abbot, who having read it, took a view of him from Top to Toe: He asked him, of what Order he was? He anſwered, That his Letter ſhewed that, and that he was a Reform'd *Benedictin*: The other reply'd, That he believed nothing of what he ſaid, becauſe he was not in the Habit of S. *Bennet*, which was the chief mark which diſtinguiſh'd their Order. Now, it is to be noted, that theſe Monks in *France*

wear Gowns of courſe-Cloth, with a Cowl cut very ſtrait; whereas the *Italians* have extreamly amplified theirs, and wear Stuffs very fine and luſtrous; they are very neatly ſhod, wear Silk-Stockins, fine grey Hats, and are not a whit inferior to the Bravery of Lay-men. Moreover, a ſmall difference in the Habits in *Italy*, makes alſo a difference of Order. There are about Ten ſorts of the Religious of the Order of S. *Francis*, which are only diſtinguiſh'd from one another, becauſe ſome of them have their Sleeves, or their Cowls, two or three Fingers-breadth larger than the others. And yet this makes ſo great a diviſion between them, that they cannot endure the ſight of one another, and hate one another mortally. The Monk of whom I am ſpeaking, was not ſprucely enough accommodated, according to their Mode, to pleaſe this nice and curious Abbot; and the concluſion was, That he very baſely deny'd him entrance into his Monaſtery. The poor *Benedictin* was put into ſuch a rage by this Affront put upon him, that he could not forbear downright Railing at the Abbot in his own Monaſtery; telling him, That he was an Abbot accurs'd of God; that Damnation would be his portion, and that all thoſe who lived under his Conduct, might make ſtate to go to Hell with him; that it was they that had changed the Venerable Habit of the Order; and alter'd it to that degree, that it ſeem'd at preſent rather contriv'd to pleaſe and entice young Ladies, than to diſtinguiſh them from the people of the World; and that they would ſee one day, but alas too late! what a Reception

ception their glorious Patriarch would afford them in Heaven, to that poor Habit which he had upon his Body, and which they vilified ſo much here on Earth. The Abbot found himſelf ſo extreamly netled at this Invective, that he threatned our Reformed Monk, that in caſe he did not that very Evening depart the City, he would take care to ſtop his Pipes for him. The poor Monk frighted and trembling at this Threat, returns to the Inn where I was, and gave me an account of his Diſaſter. This was the Reaſon that I ſtay'd only three Days at *Genoua*, becauſe my Companion, for fear of being Sacrificed to the *Italick* Revenge, durſt not ſtir abroad, but was fain to keep himſelf ſhut up in a Chamber, all the while I ſtaid there to take a view of the City.

Revenge is an abominable Vice, and which at preſent is not without great Reaſon particularly appropriated to the *Italians*; but certainly amongſt them all, there are none who exerciſe and act it with greater Rage and Fury than the Clergy; who, as they have no Families to care for, their Attention is leſs divided, and conſequently more united and concentred, to reſent Injuries done unto them, and have alſo more leiſure time to deſcant upon them; and beſides all this, in caſe of any Accident, they have none but their own perſons to ſave. Neither do they fear ſo much as others the Confiſcation of their Goods, as being aſſured, That whatſoever Country their Lot may caſt them upon, ſo it be the *Romiſh* Communion, they cannot miſs of getting a Livelyhood by their Maſſes, and of being furniſh'd

furniſh'd with a full ſupply of their Neceſſities. This is a Patrimony that follows them whitherſoever they go, and cannot be taken away from them, but with their Life. One thing which extreamly facilitates the taking of Revenge in *Italy*, is, the great number of petty Principalities, into which it is divided; and whereof the Princes are all of them Independent one of another, and extreamly jealous of preſerving their Rights, eſpecially of *Protection* and *Refuge*, to thoſe who having done ſome ill Turn, retire themſelves to their Territories. The King of *France* would ſooner and with more eaſe obtain a Fugitive perſon from the Emperor, than from the Duke of *Mirandula*, whoſe Territories do not extend themſelves to Three *Italian* Miles; becauſe always the more inconſiderable any Power is, the more it ſtrives to appear great. The Commonwealth of S. *Marin*, is but an inconſiderable Hamlet of about ſome Fifty Houſes of poor Peaſants, who are govern'd by themſelves: And tho' they be ſhut in on every ſide by the *Pope*'s Territories, which they call the *Domaine* of S. *Peter*, yet they do give ſuch a reſolute Protection to Prieſts guilty of Murther, or Manſlaughter, that it is not poſſible for the *Pope* to perſwade them, to deliver up any one of them. Neither are the Sovereign Princes of *Italy* only thus jealous of the Franchiſes of their Eſtates, but alſo all perſons of Quality in general, who will not permit a Malefactor to be ſeized in their Houſes. I ſhall here tell you by the by, Sir, that it is this pretended Liberty, which was the Riſe of the Franchiſe or Liberty of the Ambaſſadors of Crowned-Heads

Heads at *Rome*, and which caus'd the great Diſpute between Pope *Innocent* XI. and the *French* King: For ſeeing the Ambaſſadors to diſtinguiſh themſelves were willing to have ſome priviledge above the ordinary Nobility, they did not only pretend to have an Immunity for their Palaces, but over and above, an entire Franchiſe throughout all the Quarters where their Abode was. Now Pope *Innocent* the XIth conceived it an Enterprize becoming his Glory and Courage, efficaciouſly to endeavour the final deſtruction of theſe Retreats for Robbers and Murtherers in *Rome*, obliging the Ambaſſadors for ever to renounce the Franchiſes of the Quarters, and to content themſelves, for the reſpect born to their Maſters, with the Immunity of their Houſes. But to ſpeak Truth, To what purpoſe was it for the *Pope* to be ſo Zealouſly bent, to aboliſh theſe places of Refuge? Did not he know, that all the Churches, Monaſteries, Convents, and Colledges of *Rome*, are ſo many open places, which one meets with at every turn, where Injuſtice, Inceſt, Robbery and Murther are protected and ſecur'd? I confeſs, it ſeems not unreaſonable, that the Churches of God ſhould be eſteemed ſo Holy and Sacred, as to make it a kind of Profanation to enter them Armed, in order to ſeize a Criminal; but what reaſon is there to allow the ſame Priviledge to all Cloiſters and Houſes of thoſe wretched Monks, that are the very worſt of Criminals? And the compaſs of whoſe Walls take up ſo much ground, that if they were all joyn'd together, they would without doubt make more than a third part of *Rome*; and what is the

Sacred

Sacredneſs and Holineſs of theſe Profane perſons, for which they are to enjoy this Exemption? For my part, I cannot imagine any other Reaſon for it, but that the *Pope*, with the reſt of the Eccleſiaſtical Princes of that Communion, endeavouring no leſs to eſtabliſh their Temporal Power, than their Uſurped Tyranny over the Souls of men, will be very backward of diminiſhing the Priviledges belonging to the Monaſteries that are amongſt them; leſt Foreign Princes following their Example, ſhould undertake the ſame in their Countries; and ſeeing, that the *Monks* always ſide with the *Pope*, the taking of this courſe, would be a manifeſt weakning of their own party. Moreover, theſe Monks are of ſuch mean and intereſſed Spirits, that if the *Pope* or a *Cardinal* ſend to them, to deliver up any that have taken Refuge with them, they immediately comply with the Demand, as being well pleaſed to have this occaſion, to procure their Favour at ſo cheap a rate: But if any other Secular Lord comes to requeſt any ſuch thing of them, then they ſtand ſtiffly in defence of their Priviledges, and without a good piece of Mony in hand, will never grant their Requeſt. Eſpecially if the Criminal be a Monk or a Clergy-man; and indeed (as was mentioned before) that which makes them ſo bold in revenging themſelves, is the aſſurance they have of being always ſeconded and aſſiſted by ſome of their Brotherhood: For upon any ſuch occaſions they are very ready to take one anothers part, ſo that it is impoſſible to offend any one of them, without engaging with a whole party. For either they are Monks or Fryers,

Fryers, and ſo are Fellow-members with all thoſe of the ſame Order, Convent or Monaſtery; or they are Secular Prieſts, and ſo make up one Body with all the other Prieſts of their Dioceſs, Cathedral or Pariſh, there being never a Church ſo inconſiderable, that has not at leaſt fifteen or twenty Prieſts belonging to it: So that when any one Member of the ſame Body is offended, all the reſt are affected by Sympathy, and endeavour to revenge it, as done to themſelves. 'Tis evident, that a Spirit of Charity does not engage them to theſe courſes; for Charity avengeth not it ſelf: But 'tis a kind of Natural pleaſure they take, to make others feel the effects of their Rage and Fury, that have either offended them, or thoſe they have any relation to; and which makes them ſay with one of their Poets,

Dolciſſima, Mortali, é la Vendetta.
Revenge is the ſweeteſt thing in the World.

My ſelf, when I was at *Bononia*, counted no leſs than Seventeen in one Week, that had been ſacrificed to this infernal Fury, and who (for the moſt part of them) had been murthered by either Monks or Prieſts. The great Provoſt, who there is called the *Bargello*, having by Order of the Cardinal-Archbiſhop made ſearch for a Monk, who very ſcandalouſly kept a publick Stews, was one of the number of theſe unhappy Victims, being miſerably maſſacred on *Eaſter-day*, as he was coming out of a Church. One of the moſt dreadful means the Clergy have to glut their Vengeance, is the *Inquiſition*, which

which they have introduced under the pretext of Religion; tho' indeed it be the moſt Diabolical Invention that ever was forged in Hell, and which they do as dexterouſly manage for the ſerving of their particular ſelf-ends. They have mad it an Inquiſition-matter for any to ſtrike, affront or vilifie any perſon belonging to the Clergy, whether Secular or Regular. I will give you an Inſtance how they proceeded at *Bononia*, againſt an honeſt man of my Acquaintance, who in the heat of his Paſſion had called a Dominican Fryer, *Old Fool of a Monk*. The Fryer immediately went and made his Complaint to the Inquiſitor, who fortwith caus'd the Young-man to be ſeized, and caſt into the Inquiſition-Priſon, where he continued Ten Months before ever any enquiry was made about the Cauſe of his Commitment. At laſt he was brought before the ſacred Tribunal; and foraſmuch as he could not deny, but that he had called the Fryer, *Old Fool of a Monk*; his Indictment was drawn up to this purpoſe. He who doth not reſpect Church-men, doth not believe the Eccleſiaſtick State worthy of Honour, and conſequently is an Heretick: Now it is apparent, that you have had no reſpect for Brother *Nicholas*, who is an Eccleſiaſtick; and conſequently, neither do you think the Eccleſiaſtick State worthy of Honour, and therefore are an Heretick. The Defendant pleaded for himſelf, That it was true he called the Plaintiff, *Old Fool*, but only with reſpect to his perſon, without intending the leaſt reflection upon his Profeſſion. But the Plaintiff inſiſted, That he called him *Fool* with reſpect

to

to his Profeſſion, by joyning the word *Monk* with that reproachful word, and without adding theſe words, *Saving your Character.* For true it is, That if in *Italy* a man chance to affront a Prieſt or a Monk, by calling them, *Knaves, Raſcals*, or the like, ſo he do but remember immediately to ſubjoyn, *Saving your Character*, or *Saving your Habit*, they cannot make an Inquiſition matter of it; but if by miſchance this be forgot, he is undone. Thus this poor Gentleman was found guilty. As for Striking any one of the Clergy, in what manner ſoever it be, whether ſorely or ſlightly, it is always a matter the Inquiſition takes cognizance of. And this is that which makes the men of the Church ſo peremptory and inſolent througout all *Italy.* I hapned at *Rome* to ſee a Prieſt, who fell out with an Officer in the *Piazza Navona:* The Officer very dexterouſly and freely ſtain'd the Prieſt with his Tongue, never forgetting at the end of each Injury, to compliment him with a *Saving his Character*; which ſo confounded the poor Prieſt, that quite foaming with Rage, he began to ſay to the People that ſtood about; *Gentlemen, I muſt put this man into the Inquiſition, for if I be not miſtaken he ſtruck me: Did not you ſee him give me a ſlight ſtroak?* Indeed, he could have wiſh'd he had with all his heart, that ſo he might have had an opportunity to have proſecuted his Revenge; but none of thoſe that were preſent having ſeen any ſuch thing, they could not witneſs againſt him. The *Italians* have a Proverb, *That he who would live peaceably at* Rome, *muſt take heed of offending any Female, or*

Prieſt

Prieſt; becauſe the Women procure their Lovers to work their Revenge, and the Clergy make uſe of the Inquiſition to avenge themſelves. 'Tis true indeed, That perſons of Rank amongſt them, as Abbots, Biſhops, and Cardinals, do not ordinarily make uſe of this means, as appearing to them a little too troubleſom. They have Servants and Dependents, who for Mony, or to obtain ſome Favour, do voluntarily offer themſelves to be the Executioners of their Revenge; and if at any time they chance to be ſeized in the Act, they are but very little concern'd at it, fully relying upon their Maſters Power and Authority, who are never wanting, by all manner of means, to procure their diſcharge and liberty. As for the Popes, who are no more exempt from this weakneſs than other men, neither do they forget, upon occaſion, to make uſe of the Power they have in their hands; but like other Monarchs, whenever they are offended, ſhew themſelves to have long Hands. There is no ſpeaking to theſe Holy Fathers, of Humility or Patience in ſuffering of Injuries, in imitation of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, whoſe perſon they will needs repreſent upon Earth. They have in a manner rejected all his Vertues, and their ſtudy at preſent is to repreſent here below, his Heavenly Glory, *viz.* his Power and Judicature. The Title of *Holineſs*, which is given them, is only a ſwelling Term they make uſe of to expreſs their Pride. We have a ſignal Example of Revenge in the Life of Pope *Sixtus* the Fifth. He was of a very mean Extraction, his Father being a poor Vine-dreſſer, and his Mother a Serving-maid, and

he

he himſelf in his Youth was reduced to be a Hog-heard; and yet by the ſubtilty of his Spirit, in conjunction with an extraordinary Fortune, he ſtept over all theſe Difficulties, and mounted the Pontifical Throne. But ſo far was this Meanneſs of his Birth from inſpiring him with an anſwerable degree of Humility, in the midſt of that Greatneſs to which he was rais'd, that he could not endure to hear the leaſt hint of it; but by a revengeful Inclination, which was natural to him, he let looſe his cruel and unrelenting Nature againſt all thoſe, who either imprudently, or of ſet-purpoſe let drop the leaſt word of Contempt reflecting that way; of which the following Story may be a pregnant Inſtance: The Statue of *Paſquin* in *Rome* appeared one morning with a very naſty Shirt pull'd over it; and *Morforius* demanding the Reaſon, *Why for ſhame he did not ſhift himſelf, and put on a clean one? Becauſe* (anſwered *Paſquin*) *my Waſher-woman is become a Princeſs.* This Anſwer ſtung the Pope's Siſter *Camilla*, who of a poor Waſher-woman, which ſhe was before, was by her Brother rais'd to a Principality. The Pope being enrag'd at this cutting Satyr, made uſe of all the ways imaginable to find out the Author; but miſſing the deſired ſucceſs in this his Reſearch, he betook himſelf to Craft and Circumvention, but that to one ſo baſe and unworthy, that the ſole recital of it is ſufficient to ſtrike a man with horrour. He caus'd it to be publiſhed every where, *That he was ſo extreamly pleas'd with the delicate Poignancy of this piece of Wit, that if the Author of it would come and diſ-*

cover himſelf to him, he would be ſo far from puniſhing him with Death, that he would beſtow upon him Two thouſand Crowns for a Reward. The poor unhappy Wretch, trepan'd by this advantageous promiſe, makes himſelf known. The Pope, upon owning himſelf to be the Author of it, caus'd the Two thouſand Crowns to be counted out to him, aſſuring him withal, That he would be as good as his word, and that he ſhould not be hanged. At which words, the Wretch overjoy'd, pour'd forth his moſt humble Acknowledgments to his Holineſs, for ſo unparallel'd a piece of Grace. *Ay, Ay,* (anſwer'd the Pope) *I will be as good as my word in all this; but take notice, Sirrah, that I never promis'd you not to cauſe your Hands to be cut off, and your Tongue to be pluckt out of your Head.* And immediately commanded the cruel Sentence to be executed in his preſence, as a pleaſing Sacrifice to his implacable Revenge. I have ſometimes ſet my ſelf to enquire, what might be the cauſe of this Spirit of Vengeance, which nowadays is become ſo natural to the *Italians*, whether it proceed from the Climate, or Nature of the Country, or from ſome other neceſſary and inevitable Cauſe. But having called to my remembrance the Generoſity, Courage, and Greatneſs of Soul that ſhone forth ſo illuſtriouſly in the Lives of the Ancient *Romans*, who inhabited the ſame Country, and who rendred themſelves every where as amiable by their Clemency, as formidable for their Valour, I ſoon found that I was rather to ſeek for a Moral Cauſe of it, than a Natural; and as far as I can reach it is this, That the

greateſt

greateſt part of *Italy*, in proceſs of time, being fallen under the Domination of the Biſhops of *Rome*, they ſent Prieſts to be their Lieutenants in the ſeveral Provinces of their Dominions; a ſort of people equally ignorant in matters of Commerce and War, which are the two Sinews of State, and without which the Government is like a Body afflicted with the Palſy, without either Action or Motion. This Idleneſs, joyn'd to the great Heat of the Country, and to the corrupt Examples of the ſaid Governors, as being men that only minded their Pleaſures, at laſt introduced an entire diſſolution and effeminacy. In *Rome* of old, the *Sword* ſometime gave way to the *Robe*, and *Arms* to *Letters*. *Cedant Arma Togæ*. But at preſent all veils to the Love of Women. This Love being exceſſive and unbounded, is the inſeparable Companion of Jealouſie; and the fruit of Jealouſie, inexorable Revenge; which are the two great Vices which do ſtain the Reputation of the *Italians*. From this great eaſineſs of Revenging themſelves, when affronted in their Amours, they are now arriv'd to that point, as not to ſuffer the leaſt word, or the leaſt injury to fall to the ground, without taking (ſo it be in their power) a moſt pitileſs Revenge. This Vice, which had its birth in the Pope's Dominions, has inſenſibly diſpers'd it ſelf into thoſe of the Neighbouring Princes, and at preſent miſerably infected all *Italy*. It has been obſerved, that *Bononia* and *Ferrara*, who were the laſt that have ſubmitted their Necks to the *Roman Yoke*, have ſince that time doubled their revengeful Spirit. But that which is moſt of all to be condemned in their way

of Revenge is, That they do commonly execute it in the baſeſt and moſt cowardly manner imaginable; that is, either by poiſon, or treacherouſly ſtabbing their Enemy in the back. They deride our Duels, and ſay, It is the greateſt folly in the World to put the Sword in our Enemies hand, and by this means ſtate him in as fair a condition of being Reveng'd of us, as we our ſelves are of being aveng'd of him. When we have an Enemy (ſay they) we are not ſuch Fools to cry to him at a diſtance, *Stand upon your Guard*; but endeavour to kill him with the firſt occaſion, without putting our ſelves to the hazard of being kill'd by him. However, Sir, tho' the *Italians* have their Faults, yet on the other hand I muſt own, that they alſo have their good Qualities; they are very prudent in the conduct of their Affairs, very diſcreet in their Diſcourſe, civil and handſom in their Carriage amongſt themſelves, or towards Strangers; they are good Counſellors, and very ready to render Service; conſtant in their Friendſhip, and of a very obliging Humor, provided it coſt them nothing: They are very witty, and I dare ſay, that if their Prieſts and their Monks had not corrupted them in their Morals, and had not ſo ſtrangely ſpoil'd and chang'd their Religious Worſhip, (as well as the beſt Country in *Europe*) they would be ſome of the beſt men in the World. Indeed, *Popery* is grown to that prodigious exceſs of Idolatry, Superſtition, and Folly, that I am aſtoniſh'd they are ſo backward in caſting off that Yoke. I know there are a great many amongſt them, that begin to open their Eyes, and ſee their Errors; but they

they dare not declare their Minds to any one whatſoever, for fear of falling Victims to the barbarous and inexorable Cruelty of the *Inquiſition*. This Tribunal was ſet up more particularly for a Curb to the *Italians*, amongſt whom many began to waver, than to debate the Doctrin of *Rome*. And in order to make it the more fierce and terrible, the *Popes* thought they could not truſt it in better hands than thoſe of the *Dominicans*, a cruel and pitileſs ſort of Fellows, and more than any other Order, engag'd to maintain the Pope's Intereſt. And to encourage them to a rigorous diſcharge of that barbarous and butcherly Function, they have found it convenient from time to time, to confer the Epiſcopal Dignity upon the moſt zealous Inquiſitors, and even to raiſe many of them to the Eminence of Cardinals. Throughout all the Dominions of the Great Duke of *Florence*, this Employ has always been attributed to the *Franciſcans*, many of whom likewiſe have been elevated to Biſhopricks and Cardinals-Caps. The end in dividing the Inquiſition thus between two different Orders, was only in order to the more vigorous maintaining of the ſame by the Emulation of both the Pretenders. The main deſign at firſt intended for the erecting of the *Inquiſition*, was by ways of Blood and Violence, to put a ſtop to the progreſs of Hereſie, or to ſpeak in their own terms, *Contra Hæreticam pravitatem*, *Againſt Heretical Pravity*. But the Clergy having ſince conſidered the great advantage the *Inquiſition* gave them above the Laity, have learnt ſo dexterouſly to ſerve themſelves of it, that at preſent there is ſcarce

any thing, which they have not brought within the Verge of that Court, in order to bring about their private Self-ends. If you fail of paying your Tithes, without troubling them to examin, Whether you be able or not; they Argue, That the Reaſon why you do not pay them, is becauſe you don't believe they ought to be paid, and conſequently, that you are an Heretick. If the leaſt word chance to drop from you, reflecting upon the Licentious Lives of the Biſhops and Clergy, whether Regular or Secular, they accuſe you as one whoſe deſign is to vilifie the Epiſcopal Dignity, and conſequently the Church it ſelf, in the eyes of the people; that in ſo doing you have done the Hereticks work for them, and ſerved their Intereſt, and therefore muſt be lookt upon as being one your ſelf. If a man be known to have an Eſtate, and in the mean time ſhews himſelf cold and indifferent in contributing to the Collections that are made for the ſaying of Maſſes, and other Prayers, for the repoſe of the Souls of the Dead; tho' it be well known, that there is never a Prieſt or Monk that will ſo much as ſay one without mony, he is preſently accuſed, as one who doth not believe *Purgatory*, and conſequently a downright Heretick. Nay moreover, if any one be frequently obſerv'd to refuſe putting ſomething into thoſe Boxes that continually run up and down the Streets, to help to celebrate the Feſtivals of ſuch an he or ſhe Saint, towards ſuch a Proceſſion, in ſuch a Church, towards the Chappel of the *Roſary*, towards the Scapulary of the *Bleſſed Virgin*, or for the Cord of S. *Francis*; theſe Fellows have the impu-

impudence to tell you, That they ſee well enough you have no Devotion for Holy Things, and conſequently believe little of them; which is a kind of Advertiſement, That in caſe you ſhould be guilty again of the ſame neglect, occaſion would be taken to recommend you to the *Inquiſition*, there to learn better manners. It is not lawful for any to excuſe, or to intercede (either in perſon, or by ones friends) directly or indirectly, for thoſe who have had the miſhap to fall into the Priſons of the *Inquiſition*, except you have a mind to involve your ſelf in the guilt of the ſame Crimes, whereof they are attainted. One cannot ſo much as come to ſpeak with them without an expreſs permiſſion given in Writing by the Inquiſitor himſelf, which he never grants, but with a great deal of difficulty, and very ſeldom. An Abbot of *Calabria*, one of my Acquaintance, was put into the Inquiſition at *Venice*, for ſmiling at the ſtory a certain Monk told, about the Apparition of a Soul in *Purgatory*. After that he had been a whole year in Priſon, I underſtood that Sentence of Death was not yet pronounced againſt him, tho' he had been ſeveral times put upon the Rack; and having occaſion to go to the Inquiſitor, to obtain his Licence for printing of a Book; I took this opportunity to beg leave of him, that I might go and ſee this poor Priſoner; who having heard the Requeſt I made him, look'd ſternly upon me, and demanded what buſineſs I had to concern my ſelf with him? I told him, That nothing made me to deſire this Favour, ſave only a motive of Charity, to beſtow ſome words of Comfort upon him. But

the Monk answered me in a most rude and disobliging way, or rather like himself, That the Prisoner was in very good hands, and did not at all stand in need of any of my Comfort; so that it was not possible for me to get to speak with him. However, I had the satisfaction of seeing him set at Liberty about six Months after, through the charitable Care, and powerful Intercession of *Cornelia Episcopia*, a Noble *Venetian* young Lady, of extraordinary Learning and Merit, to whom my Friend dedicated his Learned Poems, which he had Composed during the time of his Confinement. I have before mentioned, that it was not lawful to intercede for any, that are committed by the *Inquisition*; but you must know, Sir, that the *Inquisition* is much more favourable in *Venice*, than it is in other parts of *Italy*. That wise Senate abhorring the Inhumanity of those Monks that manage it, have erected a particular Chamber, where some *Venetian* Nobles preside, and take Cognizance of all Matters that are brought before the *Inquisition*, insomuch that the *Dominicans* are not altogether the Masters of it. This Friend of mine having had the good Fortune to escape so great a danger, was so sensibly touched with the Cruelties they had made him suffer during his Imprisonment, that he readily concluded from thence, that the Church of *Rome* being possest with such a Spirit of Cruelty and Barbarity, as is never to be parallel'd even amongst the worst of Heathens, could never be the true Spouse of Jesus Christ. She might indeed be allowed the prudence of Serpents, for her own preservation,

ſervation, provided it were always in Conjunction with the mild Nature of the Dove, that ſo ſhe might not render her ſelf unworthy of, and unlike to him, who wills us to learn of him to be meek and lowly of heart. My Friend confeſt to me, that indeed, before he was caſt in Priſon, he had ſome doubts about Purgatory and Tranſubſtantiation; but that ſince that they had gone about to make him believe them perforce, he believed nothing at all of them, and that he was reſolved to retire into *Switzerland* or *Geneva*; there to enjoy that Liberty of Conſcience, which would not be allow'd him in his own Country. He told me that never a Night paſt over his head, in which he was not diſquieted in his Sleep, with the frightful Idea's and repreſentations of the Torments he had in their Dungeons, where they had rackt all his Members out of joynt, one after another, bruiſed all his Fingers, and applied plates of red hot Iron to the Soles of his Feet. And after all this, to make him the more ſenſible of his pains, they in this Condition ſhut him up again for ſome days in his Dungeon, allowing him nothing but a poor morſel of brown Bread, and a ſmall meaſure of Water, and then again put him into the Hands of the Executioners of the Inquiſition, to go through a new courſe of Torments. They tied him by one Arm, and by means of a Pully, hoiſted him up into the Air, and there left him hanging for ſeveral hours, which time being over, they let him down again, rather dead than alive; and to bring him to himſelf again, they moſt cruelly and inhumanly ſcourg'd him with a kind

a kind of a Whip made of ſlender Iron Chains full of points, as ſharp as Needles, and this till he was all of a gore Blood. And all this, O ſtrange and unparallel'd Barbarity! to diſcover the Secrets of a poor Conſcience, and to ſearch the bottom of a Heart, which God has reſerved to himſelf as his own Divine Prerogative. The Father Inquiſitor, who was all the while preſent to encourage the Executioners, and to obſerve whether they were not wanting in their Duty, ſometimes would draw near to the Patient, and with a ſevere Tone demand of him, Whether he did not believe *Purgatory* yet, wiſhing him to think ſeriouſly of it, for that all that he ſuffered there, was but a ſlight draught of the Torments of that place, and that it was much more terrible to fall into the Hands of the Living God. This poor Gentleman anſwered nothing to all this, ſave only by ſighs and tears. But he confeſſed to me, that ſince he had made a very ſerious Reflection upon this matter, and that he was come to this Reſult, That it was utterly inconſiſtent with the infinite Goodneſs of God, to treat thoſe Souls whom he had deſtinated to his heavenly Glory, and the enjoyment of himſelf for ever, to ſuch Extremities of Pains and Torments. That all the Works of God being perfect, he ſhewed Mercy to whom he ſhewed Mercy, that is to ſay, perfect and compleat Mercy; and that it was infinitely more glorious for him, wholly to pardon both Guilt and Puniſhment, than to reſerve himſelf a miſerable Vengeance from the Fire and Flames of their feigned *Purgatory*, and that for this very reaſon he did not believe any thing

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of it at all. The common puniſhment inflicted at *Venice* on thoſe who are convict of Hereſie, is either to ſtrangle them in Priſon, or to tie a great ſtone to their Necks, and ſo caſt them into the Sea. And herein alſo the Inquiſition of *Venice* is much more favourable than it is in other parts of *Italy*, where they either burn them alive with a ſlow Fire, or elſe cut off their Members, one by one, which are caſt into the Fire before their Eyes, after having firſt of all pluck'd out their Tongues, and made them ſuffer unexpreſſible Torments. Can you ever believe in good earneſt, Sir, that this is the Spirit of the Goſpel? Is this the way our Saviour made uſe of to convert Sinners? Did he ever threaten the Diſobedient or Unbelievers with Priſons, Racks and Tortures? Has he ever left us ſo much as one Example or Command to Authorize this Sacred Inquiſitional Method? I trow no, and conſequently this cannot be the Spirit of Chriſtianity. Thus theſe very means the Popes take to maintain their Tyranny over the Conſciences of men, might ſerve (and without doubt will ſo in time) for juſt Motives to pull it down, if the people would once open their eyes, and vigorouſly oppoſe themſelves to the effects of a moſt unjuſt and inhuman Violence. 'Tis Vertue alone that ſtands in need of no ſupport; but Sin and Iniquity are always in the ſearch of props and contrivances to uphold their tottering and crazy conſtitution; and what they cannot carry by the ſtrength of the Lion, they endeavour to bring about by the Foxes craft. Thus what the Popes and their Adherents cannot obtain by the Inquiſition, they ſtrive

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to compaſs by Artifice and Lies. One of the chief Fetches they have to keep the people in their Obedience, is to ſecure them in the Chains of profound Ignorance; firſt of the Truths of the Goſpel; very expreſly forbidding them to read the Holy Scriptures, as a Book very dangerous and pernicious to their Souls. Their next care is to prevent any Books of Controverſie, written by Proteſtants, from coming into their Hands. 'Tis an Inquiſitional matter to have or read any of them, or to be privy to any others having of them. Moreover they take ſpecial care to charge the Preachers in their Sermons, that in ſpeaking of the Proteſtants, who being very well grounded in their Principles, muſt conſequently be lookt upon, as the moſt formidable Enemies the Church of *Rome* has, they be ſure to repreſent them to their Auditors, as men that have abſolutely renounced the Faith of Jeſus Chriſt, and who do no more believe in him, than Heathens and Infidels. Wherefore alſo, they indifferently call them Hereticks and Infidels; or to make uſe of the *Italian* word, *Queſti non Chriſtiani*. So that indeed all the Common People, yea and the greateſt part of thoſe that are learned too, are of the Opinion, That Proteſtants do not at all believe in Jeſus Chriſt, no more than the Turks do. A Canon once demanded of me in *Rome*, by way of Curioſity, What the Infidels did in *France*, and why they were ſuffered there? I deſired him to tell me what he meant by that word, which I did not underſtand; and finding that he ſpoke of Proteſtants, I told him that they were no Infidels, but believed in Jeſus Chriſt

Chriſt as well as the *Roman Catholicks*, only that they rejected Tranſubſtantion, the Maſs, Purgatory, &c. and in particular the power and infallibility of the Pope. And having heard me Diſcourſe at this rate a good while; In truth, Sir, ſaid he, if the Caſe be as you ſay, I perceive that thoſe people are not ſuch great Devils as they are repreſented to us here. I have often heard it declared from the Pulpit, that they were as unbelieving as the Jews themſelves; and you are the very firſt I ever heard ſay, that the Proteſtants believed in Jeſus Chriſt. But, Sir, ſaid I, it is impoſſible, but that you who have ſtudied Divinity, muſt needs have heard of the Opinions of *Luther*, *Calvin*, and *Zuinglius*, in the Treatiſe of the Sacraments in general, and in particular of thoſe of the Euchariſt, Penance, the Sacrifice of the Maſs,&c. *I* know, ſaid he, that thoſe Ringleaders of Hereſie pretended not to deſtroy, but to reform the Church; and as to ſome points, they have very ſtrong Arguments, which even to this day we are hard put to, to anſwer. But nevertheleſs God, who hath a particular care of his Church, that he might make known to Believers that theſe then were in a bad way, has ſo ordered it, that their whole party came to nothing. For as one Error draws on another, they have ſtill rowled from one precipice to another, till at laſt they are fallen into the Abyſs of Infidelity. They at firſt ſeparated themſelves from the Church of *Rome*, upon the pretence of Reforming it, but ſome time after their followers, reduced all to the particular Spirit, which is to believe what they pleaſe, and that, provided only they

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do worſhip one God, whoſoever he be, and lead a morally good Life, that this is enough for them to be ſaved. I perceived by this Diſcourſe, Sir, that this Canon had been ill informed (as indeed moſt part of the *Italians* are) of the preſent ſtate of Proteſtants and of their Doctrin, and that at *Rome* all manner of ſlights and tricks are made uſe of againſt thoſe who refuſe to bow their Knees to *Baal*. To tell a Lye with them is a Vertue, as long as it is but employ'd, as they think, for a good end. I remember that a Jeſuit who was lately come from *England*, boldly preached in the Church of *Lateran*, that all Religion there was reduced to the particular Spirit. And having made an ample Deſcription of the Meetings of the *Anabaptiſts* and *Quakers*, under the Name of the Church of *England*, when he came to ſpeak of their ſighing and groaning, and their Women preaching, he made all his Auditory break forth into a loud laughter, and by this means, without doubt, tho' with a great deal of Injuſtice, he made many there preſent conceive very contemptuouſly of that Auguſt and Venerable Body of Proteſtants, the Church of *England*, ſo zealous for the Glory of God, and of Jeſus Chriſt his only Son; ſo exact and decent in the Worſhip and Obedience ſhe renders to his Divine Majeſty, and ſo reaſonable in her Orders and Ceremonies. As long as thoſe vigilant Paſtors, the Biſhops of the Church of *England*, and the learned Miniſters that are under them, keep their watchful Eyes fixed on the Flocks committed to their Charge, there is no cauſe to fear that ever the Romiſh Wolf will be in a condition

dition to ſnatch ſo much as any ſingle one of them out of their Hands; nor will any of her *Emiſſaries*; as ſubtle Thieves as they be, ever be able by night to ſteal into the Sheepfold to devour or maſſacre them, as they have already ſo often endeavoured to do. I have ſince made this Obſervation on this Sermon of the Jeſuit, which I heard from the beginning to the end, and I could wiſh all Proteſtants might ſeriouſly take it to heart, *viz.* That to pull down the Church of *Rome*, the great Secret is not abſolutely to reject, as ſome do, all that ſhe practiſeth; but that the beſt way to compaſs her downfal is, to retain all that is good in her, only rejecting the evil. If we abſolutely reject all Faſts, becauſe they of the Church of *Rome* obſerve ſome of them, as they deſire nothing more than to blacken the Proteſtants, repreſenting their Actions in the worſt Light they can, and always concealing the good that is amongſt them, they preſently cry with open Throat, That the Proteſtants are a ſort of people that love nothing but their Bellies, abhorring and abominating whatever ſerves to mortifie the Fleſh. If we reject Epiſcopacy, They hate, cry they, all manner of Subjection, and love nothing but Independency. If we refuſe the uſe of *Common Prayer*, we are not joyn'd in the Band of Charity, neither is there any Union amongſt us: If we do not from time to time conſult the Miniſters in Caſes of Conſcience, we reduce all to the private Spirit. In a word, If we celebrate Marriages and Funerals, without any Prayers or Ceremonies, they ſay that Proteſtants go together like Beaſts, and are buried like Dogs.

Dogs. At this rate did this calumniating Jeſuit, with a renowned Malice, from the beginning of his Sermon to the end, endeavour to make them odious and execrable. Neither was it a hard matter for him to obtain his end, in a Country where they are ſo little known, and where they are never mentioned but under the Notion of Devils, Hereticks, new Chriſtians and Infidels. But the caſe would be much altered, if retaining what is good and lawful, or only indifferent amongſt them, as far as may be, the Proteſtants would ſingly apply themſelves to oppoſe thoſe points of Doctrin or Practice amongſt them, which firſt occaſioned the Reformation; for ſo they would not be able to condemn them in any thing, but by producing the points of Doctrin and Practice in Controverſie, with the oppoſitions made againſt them; which is a thing they are very loath to do, for fear of diſcovering their own Nakedneſs. An evident proof of what I here alledge, is the great care they take, to hinder any Books of Controverſie from coming into *Italy*, not ſo much as thoſe which have been pen'd by the moſt famous men of their own party. I was extreamly put to it, when I was at *Rome* to meet with the Works of Monſieur *Arnaud*, which he had dedicated to the Pope, and which I don't believe were ever yet tranſlated into *Italian*; their deſign herein being to prevent, by all means imaginable, the true ſtate of the queſtion from being known; for their Objections are ſo weak, and the Anſwers they make to thoſe of the Proteſtants, ſo pitiful, that any unprejudiced mind may eaſily from their own Books perceive on what

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ſide the truth lies. If ever there was any Author that ſtrain'd his Wits to calumniate and blacken the Proteſtants, it was without doubt Father *Maimbourg* the Jeſuit, in his Books of *Lutheraniſm* and *Calviniſm:* When I was at *Venice* I undertook the Tranſlation of all his Works; and had already tranſlated ſeveral of his Volumes, when I took in hand thoſe of *Lutheraniſm* and *Calviniſm*; but I was not a little ſurpriz'd, when the Inquiſitor of *Venice* would not give me leave to continue the Traduction; and ſometime after I received an Order from the Pope, forbidding me to print thoſe two Books, with another of the ſame Authors, treating about the growth of the Power of the Biſhops of *Rome*. The ſingle Title of Biſhop which was given him in this laſt Treatiſe, inſtead of the magnificent Titles of Pope and Soveraign Prieſt, together with ſome curious Enquiries concerning the riſe and progreſs of that prodigious Grandeur to which the Biſhops of *Rome* are mounted at preſent, were a powerful motive to the Pope to condemn it. But I could not penetrate what reaſon he had to pronounce the ſame Sentence againſt the other two, except it were, as I have hinted before, to prevent the occaſion of renewing in the minds of the *Italians*, the ſtate of the Queſtion between the Catholicks and the Proteſtants. For notwithſtanding both theſe Books be fraught with Scoffs, injurious Reproaches, and Calumnies, coyn'd on purpoſe to render a party contemptible, whom they had reſolved by all manner of means to run down in the conceit of the people, yet for all this *Innocent* the XIth, did not

believe that this beating them down would prove of as great advantage to the Church of *Rome*, as the publication of ſome Points of Doctrin that are there neceſſarily inſerted, might prove dangerous and miſchievous to it. You can no way imagin, Sir, the extream precautions the Popes make uſe to prevent any Proteſtant Books, from being brought into *Italy*. As there is no other way to enter that Country by Land, without paſſing the *Alpes*, they keep men expreſs at all the paſſages thereof, to examin the Travellers that come that way, and ſearch them whether they have any forbidden Books about them; amongſt which number are accounted all thoſe that treat of Controverſies. In a Journy I made from *Venice* to *Lyons*, I took my way, in my return to *Italy*, through the Land of *Valois*; at the entry of this Country, which is a kind of ſtraight or narrow paſſage of the Mountain, there is a famous Abby of the Canons Regular of S. *Auſtin*, called S. *Maurice*. The River *Rhôſne*, which is extreamly impetuous and violent in this place, and which a little lower diſembogues it ſelf into the Lake of *Geneva*, leaves only a very narrow way, by which one muſt neceſſarily paſs to enter *Italy*. The Abbot of S. *Maurice*, had built a Gate at this Paſs, and foraſmuch as he is the Maſter of it, the Popes who know it to be one of the Keys of the *Alpes*, which opens a way to *Italy*, have charged him to have a careful Eye upon all Paſſengers coming that way, that they do not bring with them any forbidden Books, becauſe *Geneva*, which they ſtand in great fear of, is no further from it than the length of its Lake. The promiſe

miſe the Pope had made to the Abbot of making him a Biſhop, in caſe he were found faithful in the diſcharge of his Commiſſion, had made him very exact when I paſt that way. He cauſed all Paſſengers to be ſtopt without Exception, thoſe that were on Foot were ſearched at the Gate by the Guards, and thoſe on Horſe-back that had any appearance, were conducted into the Abby, where the Abbot entertained them very civilly, and made them eat with him, whilſt they were ſearching their Portmantels. The Abbot, with whom I diſcourſed after Dinner for a good while, told me that the Pope allow'd him mony towards the Entertainment of Paſſengers, becauſe without that the whole Revenue of his Abby would not have been ſufficient for it: And that he had ſent him moſt preſſing Letters to recommend to him, an extraordinary care of that Poſt, whence he eaſily conceived how much they apprehended the Books of Proteſtants at *Rome*. And being himſelf well acquainted with the temper of *Italy*, he told me, that if the *Italians*, and more particularly the Popes Subjects, might but have the leaſt Communication with *Geneva*, it might be greatly feared, they would utterly caſt off their Obedience to the Pope. Indeed there are none have more reaſon to know the weakneſs of that God on Earth, of the ſacred Colledge of Cardinals, and of other Eccleſiaſticks, than they who are the Eye-witneſſes of it; neither are there any more concern'd than they, to caſt off a Yoke, which upon other accounts is ſo inſupportable to them. One can ſcarcely call to mind the flouriſhing condition of thoſe

fair Provinces, that conſtitute the Patrimony of S. *Peter*, without ſhedding of Tears, to ſee them miſerably groaning and languiſhing at preſent, under the oppreſſive domineering of Prieſts, wholly waſte and deſolate, and deprived of their former Beauty and Ornament. Thoſe famous and ancient Cities of *Ravenna*, *Benevento*, *Spoleto*, *Peruſa*, *Orvietta*, and ſo many more, which heretofore were the glory of *Italy*, are hardly any thing elſe at preſent but heaps of Rubbiſh, occaſioned by the inſatiable avarice and rapaciouſneſs of Popes. True it is, that naturally this Country is the moſt pleaſant and fruitful Territory in the World; but withal there is none more bare of mony. The immenſe impoſitions the Pope lays on it, have exhauſted a great part of it; and the Legates he ſends thither every three years, ſtrive by all manner of Extortions, during their Triennial Government to ſqueeze out the reſt, and then return to *Rome* loaden with the Spoils of that miſerable people, where they are no ſooner arrived, but they conſume it with as much Prodigality, as they had hookt it in by Avarice and Extortion. I will not here entertain you with the Grandeur and Luxury of the Roman Court; I may have an occaſion to give you ſome account of that more at large hereafter. I ſhall only deſire you to tell me, whether indeed you do not believe that the *Italians* have great reaſon to endeavour to deliver themſelves from ſo oppreſſive an Uſurpation and Tyranny, by withdrawing at the ſame time their Conſciences from ſo intolerable a ſlavery, and their Eſtates from the hands of ſuch mercileſs Extortioners,

oners. For my part, Sir, I cannot queſtion, but that if the Learned Writings of the Proteſtants of the Church of *England*, could one day make their way into this Country, and that they would only ſo far honour them, as to give them the reading, I ſay, I doubt not but that Popery, whoſe Foundations they ſo evidently overturn, would find it ſelf at an end. Or rather let us ſay, that it ſhall be thus, when it ſhall pleaſe our great God the Father of Lights, to enlighten their minds towards an acknowledgment of their blindneſs, and to warn their hearts by his holy Grace to embrace the Truth; that then, I ſay, we ſhall ſee all *Italy* turn'd Proteſtants againſt their own Errors, and compoſing one Sheepfold with thoſe who ſo many years ago ſo courageouſly proteſted againſt them, under the one and only Shepherd of our Souls, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. I ſhall not trouble you, Sir, with the Relation of other Particulars and Curioſities, I obſerved at *Genoua*; foraſmuch as my deſign is not, as I have hinted to you before, to give you an entire Relation of my Travels, but only to ſingle out thoſe matters that more particularly have ſome reference to Religion. This is that I intend to do from time to time in theſe my Letters, if I find you continuing to give them the ſame reception wherewith you have favoured my firſt. It being my great wiſh to Evidence to you with what zeal I am,

Sir,

Your, &c.

The Third LETTER,

Of the Hoſpitals and Pilgrims of Italy, &c.

TO continue the Account I have undertaken to give you, of the Obſervations I made in my Voyage of *Italy*, relating to Matters of Religion; I ſhall tell you, Sir, That from *Genoua* we took our way along the Sea-coaſt, and in three days arrived at *Seſtre*, an Epiſcopal See, ſituate on the Sea of *Liguria*. The Biſhop of the place received us with a great deal of Civility. We had waved going by Sea to *Legorne*, becauſe the Father, my Companion, could not bear that kind of paſſage, and was beſides very fearful of falling into the hands of Pirates. None can be imagin'd more Stoical in their Diſcourſes of Death than the Monks are, neither are any more cowardly and frightful than they, when they are in any likelyhood of facing it. This made us reſolve to paſs the *Apennine* to *Luca*, and from thence continue our Journy through *Tuſcany*. The Biſhop adviſed us to take Guides along with us in paſſing the Mountain, foraſmuch as otherwiſe, he aſſur'd us, we ſhould run great hazard of being robb'd; that we had a Three days Journy to paſs through

through very deſert and ſolitary ways, where we ſhould meet with neither Houſes nor Villages, except only two or three ſorry Inns, at twelve Leagues diſtance from each other. There are als ways plenty of theſe Guides at *Seſtre*, in a readineſs to accompany Travellers, being provided with Carbines, Blunderbuſſes, Piſtols, and Bayonets. The cuſtom is to take two or three of them, or as many as one pleaſeth, to paſs the Mountain, paying them two Crowns a piece. Two *Genoua* Merchants intending the ſame way, joyn'd Company with us, which made us only take two Guides with us, at the charge of four Crowns. Our *Benedictin*, whom one would have thought a former Journy he had made to *Italy*, ſhould have made more circumſpect, had a mind to make uſe of his Wits, and to ſpare the Crown he was to pay for his ſhare to the Guides we had taken; ſaying, That he would ſpare that mony to make much of himſelf at the next Inn he ſhould come at; that there was no danger at all in paſſing the Mountain, and that all thoſe Guides were a Company of Knaves, who made it their buſineſs to fright Paſſengers, to get a piece of mony out of them; but, that he (for his part) was reſolved they ſhould have none of his. Thus having taken directions of the way in writing, he went his way two hours before us. For my part, I remembred the counſel the Biſhop had given us, who was a venerable old man; and conſider'd, that if it were only for the reſpect that is due to old Age, we ought never (where it may be done) reject the advice of ſuch perſons. For this reaſon,

I joyn'd my ſelf with the *Genoueſe* Merchants, reſolving to go with them, attended by our Guides. The *Benedictin* parted from us at ſix of the Clock, tho' with an intent not to make ſo much haſte, but that we might overtake him, that ſo he might have an opportunity of falling again(as it were by chance) into our Company, without being obliged to pay any thing towards the Guides we had taken on our own accounts. But ſo it hapned,that very unluckily for him, we ſtaid three hours longer than was intended; for we did not leave the City till Eleven of the Clock.We were extreamly ſurprized,when at the end of ſeven Leagues, upon the Mountain, we found this poor Monk ſitting on a Stone, in his Boots, lamenting, and all in Tears, for the miſhap that had befallen him. He had been ſet upon in the ſame place by five Robbers, who having diſmounted him, had taken away all his mony, and all they found in his Portmantel, except his *Breviary*,which they had reſtor'd to him; which ſeem'd to vex him more than all the reſt: *For* (ſaid he) *had they but taken this with the reſt, I ſhould at leaſt have been excuſed from ſaying my Breviary till I came to Rome.* We made a ſhift to get him on Horsback again, perſuading one of the Guides to lend him his; in conſideration of which, the Monk promis'd to give him his Boots, and we defrayed his Charges between us till we came to *Luca.* He aſſured us, That the men that had robbed him, were armed and cloathed in the ſame manner as the Guides; and that if he were not extreamly miſtaken, he had ſeen the very ſame perſons in the Market-place of *Seſtre.*

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We were told ſince, that theſe Robbers are the very Guides themſelves, who accompanying Travellers out of Town, do afterwards by a ſhorter way get before them, placing themſelves in Ambuſh near the Road by which they are ſure they muſt paſs, and never fail of robbing thoſe who have refus'd to make uſe of them, or any of their Companions. By ill-luck for our Father *Benedictin*, he had but lately receiv'd a Letter of Exchange at *Turin*, and was not to receive another till he came to *Rome*. This forced us to part Company, becauſe I was not in a condition to bear his Expence, and my own too. He reſolved therefore to take his Journy the beſt way he could to *Rome*, through the Monaſteries of all ſorts of Orders and Hoſpitals alſo, Neceſſity forcing him thereto. I ſaw him afterwards at *Rome*, where I found him not wholly recovered yet from the Miſeries he had ſuffered ſince our parting. He gave me a particular and full account of the Hoſpitals at which he called in his Journy, what they were, and the Entertainment he had met with in them. I have heard *Roman Catholicks* often reproachfully object to *Proteſtants*, That they have no Hoſpitals amongſt them to entertain Strangers; and confounding this kind of publick Hoſpitality with Charity, boldly conclude, That they are not Charitable, and conſequently no true Children of the Church. 'Tis the mark of a weak Cauſe, to lay hold of every thing it meets with to ſupport it ſelf, which notwithſtanding commonly contributes moſt to its overthrow. To defeat this pretended Charity of Catholicks, it will be ſufficient to relate

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to you what this Father told me, and what I have learnt of ſome other Travellers, which I intend in part to make the Subject of this my Third LETTER.

I ſhall tell you firſt of all in general, Sir, that all the ancient Hoſpitals of *Italy* owe their Foundation to the holy places of *Rome* and *Loretto*. The Pilgrimages to theſe ſome Ages ago, by reaſon of a more Univerſal Deluge of *Superſtition*, were much more in Vogue than they are at preſent; tho' it were to be wiſh'd they were much leſs than they are. A man was ſcarcely reputed a good Chriſtian except he had been at *Rome*. And the Popes perceiving how much this vaſt Concourſe did augment their Revenues, and rendred their Capital City rich and wealthy, found a way to oblige Confeſſors to enjoyn their Penitents, for the Expiation of the greateſt Sins, ſuch as *Rape*, *Inceſt*, and *Murther*, a Journy thither; ſo that there was no Remiſſion for theſe kind of Sins without going to *Rome*. They afterwards made reſerv'd Caſes of moſt of theſe kind of Sins, whereof we find ſtill at this day a great number in the *Bull*, entituled, *In Cœna Domini*, reſerving to themſelves alone the power of Abſolving them; ſo that in theſe Caſes, the parties concern'd muſt either go to *Rome*, or elſe reſolve never to enter into Paradice. It is true, that at preſent they have bethought themſelves of a way to ſpare men this trouble, which is, of ſending thither a good ſum of mony: With this they content themſelves now; for I am ſure, it is not the perſon they deſire, but his purſe, which at any time will abundantly ſupply

ſupply his Abſence. And foraſmuch as amongſt the great number of Pilgrims that flock'd thither out of Devotion, or of Neceſſity, for the expiation of their Sins, there were many poor people that had not wherewith to defray their Charges in publick Inns; many rich perſons, moved with compaſſion towards theſe poor Wretches, founded Hoſpitals for their Entertainment, where they received both Lodging and Diet; or at whatſoever hour of the day they call'd there, had an Alms given them, which they call *La Paſſade*; according as the Foundation was more or leſs Endowed, ſuch was the Alms, in ſome places more, in others leſs. We met with many Hoſpitals in *Italy*, that were founded towards the end of the Tenth, or the beginning of the Eleventh Century; the cauſe of which was a falſe Opinion that was uppermoſt then, *viz.* That the Day of Judgment was near, grounded upon a forged Tradition, which is preſerved ſtill to this day in the Church of *Rome*; That Chriſt being asked by his Apoſtles, How long this outward World ſhould laſt? He anſwer'd them, A Thouſand years and upward. So that the moſt part of Chriſtian Princes, and great Lords, about this Time took a Journy to *Rome*, founded Hoſpitals for the Poor and Pilgrims, and ſeveral Abbies, into which many of them retired themſelves, in expectation of the dreadful Day of Judgment. As for the Hoſpitals they founded, the Care and Adminiſtration of them was committed to Prieſts, as being the men who think themſelves concern'd in all pious Legacies, and who very readily take upon them the Care of

thoſe

thoſe places, where they find a plentiful Current of Devotional-mony. It was too much their Intereſt not to encourage ſo favourable Beginnings, and therefore were not wanting any more than at this day, conſtantly to frequent the Houſes of Widows and Rich perſons, to induce them by their laſt Wills to enlarge the Revenues of their Hoſpitals, of which they were conſtituted the Stewards and Overſeers; inſomuch, that in a little Time theſe Hoſpitals became prodigiouſly rich. It remains now only, that we take a view of the Uſe which is made of them at preſent, that thence we may judge, whether from them a good Argument can be drawn in favour of thoſe of the *Roman* Communion; to prove, that their Charity ſo far exceeds that of the *Proteſtants*, as they would fain make people believe; or, whether indeed we have not much more reaſon to infer the contrary? Our *Benedictin*, by ſad Experience, was in a condition of giving me ſome Information concerning this matter: He told me, That after he had parted with me at *Luca*, which is a ſmall Republick, he took his Journy on foot by *Alto Paſſo*, which is a very ancient and famous Hoſpital, founded by a Queen of *France*, eight miles diſtant from *Luca*. He could not exactly tell me what were the Revenues of that Hoſpital; but that this was the Law of it, That all Strangers, of what Rank or Quality ſoever, Rich or Poor, were to be receiv'd and entertain'd there Three days together, according to their Quality: But that at preſent it admits none beſides the Prieſts and Monks that paſs that way, and to other Travel-

Travellers they only give a Loaf of half a pound weight, and a pint of Wine at the Gate; and before they can be admitted to this Favour, they muſt produce ſeveral Paſſports and Letters, to prove themſelves Pilgrims, for want of which our Father was in a great danger of being ſhut out and rejected; but inſtead thereof he boldly produc'd his Letter of Obedience. The good Prieſt who examin'd them, ſeeing that the Letter was writ in Latin, in which probably he was not over skilful, according to the Cuſtom of the Prieſts of *Italy*, let it paſs; ſaying, That he perceived it was a Travelling Letter of the *Apoſtolical Nuncio* at *Turin*; ſo that by this ſhift he was at laſt admitted. He told me, That his Entertainment there was very tolerable, and that upon his Enquiry into the manner of the Government of that Hoſpital, an old Servant of the Houſe told him, There were Twenty five Officers that were Intendants over it, ſome of them with the Titles of *Guardians*, *Adminiſtrators*, and *Receivers*; and others with the Names of the Firſt, Second, and Third Officers of the Pantry and Butlery, which were all rich Clergy-men, who divided amongſt themſelves almoſt all the Revenues of that Hoſpital, there being but a very inconſiderable part of it reſerved for thoſe few Charitable Deeds that are exerciſed there. From thence he came to *Peſche*, which is a very fine City, a ſmall days Journy from thence, where there is a vaſt number of Convents and Monaſteries. He went and preſented himſelf to ſeveral of them, to procure himſelf a Lodging; but every where they ſhut the Door upon him; for

for the *Italian* Monks are very pityleſs, and never give any Alms to Strangers. They have an Artifice amongſt them they make uſe of to refuſe poor Paſſengers which is this; All the Monks and Brothers have order to tell them, that their Abbot, Guardian, or Prior is not in the Monaſtery; and if you happen by chance to meet with the men themſelves, they tell you that the Steward, Butler, or ſome other Officer that has the purſe, is gone abroad. By this means they make the poor Travellers loſe all patience, forcing them to depart without the leaſt Relief. Our Monk being thus refuſed Admittance every where, was fain to ſeek out an Hoſpital, which he found very different from that of *Alto Paſſo*; for the bad Entertainment he there met with, tho' it was with much more difficulty that he was admitted, becauſe his Letter mention'd that he was ſent to *Rome* about Buſineſs, and not upon the account of Devotion. For tho', for the moſt part, they underſtand but little Latin; yet they are ſo wiſe as to put Travellers upon ſhewing them theſe two Words in their Letters, *Ex Devotione*. Two Hermits of thoſe *Italian* Vagabonds, who ſpent their Life in running from one Hoſpital to another, having perceived that our Monk had been ſomewhat rudely uſed by reaſon of his Letter, came to him after Supper, offering to remedy the matter, and to ſupply the defect of his Letter, ſo that he ſhould never run the hazard of expoſing himſelf to the like Affront for time to come. The way was this, They promis'd to draw up for him a Letter of *Pilgrimage*, and to affix to it the Seal of the Archbiſhop of *Lions*,

Lions, which they had counterfeited. So that the Queſtion now only was about a piece of mony they demanded of our *Benedictin* for this ſeaſonable Service; who having none to give, offer'd them his *Breviary*. The one of them abſolutely refuſed it, ſaying, That that was a bad Implement to carry with one to Hoſpitals; that it was long ſince they had been happily robb'd of theirs, and by this means were excus'd from a tedious repeating of them, according to the Decree of the Sacred Congregation at *Rome* to that purpoſe; *Amiſſo vel ablato Breviario, non tenetur Presbyter Officio*; *A Prieſt is not bound to the Duty of ſaying his Breviary, in caſe he hath loſt, or is robb'd of it.* They added, That not long ſince they had ſeen a Prieſt expell'd an Hoſpital, becauſe having a *Breviary* about him, he had forgot or neglected to ſay the Office before Supper. But his Companion accepted of the Bargain, ſaying, He would make it his buſineſs to rid himſelf of it, the firſt Bookſeller's Shop he came at. Thus the *Benedictin* at the ſame time procur'd two Advantages, the one of being rid of the trouble of ſaying his Prayers; the other, of having got a ſure Key to give him Entrance into all Hoſpitals, and this by means of a counterfeit Letter of *Pilgrimage*; which theſe two Hermits were ready (for their mony) to give to any that did deſire it. The Father being thus provided, boldly proſecuted his Journy through all the Cities of *Italy*, till he came to *Rome*, having been every where received into the Hoſpitals without any difficulty. But he proteſted to me, That if it were in his power to inflict

a ſevere puniſhment upon all the *Guardians* and *Adminiſtrators* of them, he thought that in ſo doing he ſhould render a moſt acceptable Service to God, as well as to all poor Pilgrims: Becauſe (ſaid he) it is a moſt lamentable thing to ſee how they treat them; what they give them to eat does not amount to Two-pence Charges for each perſon; and this too in ſuch a naſty and ſlovenly manner, that it turns ones ſtomach; whilſt in the mean time, thoſe wretched Prieſts engroſs and ſweep all the mony into their own Coffers, to maintain their Coach and Horſes, with the magnificent Titles they take to themſelves of *High Almoners*, *Grand Adminiſtrators*, and *Grand Priors* of the Hoſpital. 'Tis an infamous thing to ſee how they lodge poor ſtrangers: There are about Twenty or Thirty Beds in a great Room, where they lye Two and Two, or Three and Three in a Bed, according as they are ſtock'd with Company. Before they are ſuffer'd to enter into this Room, they are ſtript ſtark naked in another, without ſuffering them ſo much as to keep on their ſhifts: This done, they are all of them ſhut up together till next morning. The Beds are all rotten and ſpoil'd, and crawling with Vermin, and moſt of them without any Sheets. The Hoſpitals indeed are well Endow'd; but it is the malicious Contrivance of thoſe who have the Care and Adminiſtration of them, to give their Viſitants the worſt Entertainment they can deviſe, to turn their ſtomachs from ever coming there again; and indeed, a man muſt be reduc'd to extream Neceſſity before he can reſolve on a ſecond Viſit.

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The *Benedictin* gave me a more particular Account of an Hoſpital, which is in the Hands of the *Dominicans* of *Viterbo:* Theſe Fathers employ'd their utmoſt Endeavours with the Magiſtrates of the City, to procure the Direction of it, promiſing That they would make it their buſineſs, to take a particular Care for *Pilgrims*, by faithfully employing the Revenues thereof for their Uſe and Relief; whereupon at laſt their Requeſt was granted them. But ſince this, foraſmuch as they never had the leaſt thought of performing their Promiſe; but to make uſe of it for their own advantage, they have taken up all the beſt part of the Building for themſelves, and Lodge the *Pilgrims* that Viſit them in one of the Cellars that belong to the Houſe. Our *Benedictin* arriving here, met with a Company of Seven or Eight *Pilgrims* beſides himſelf, who were all together Lock'd up in that Cellar, without giving them either Meat or Drink, or Beds to lye upon; and left them thus ſhut up till Ten of the Clock the next Morning, at which time the Door was opened for them. The Fathers *Dominicans* ſeeing them in great confuſion coming forth from their miſerable Lodging, Scoffed at them, asking them, Whether they had lin'd their Inſides well, and been Lodged at their Eaſe? deſiring them at their Return from *Rome*, to call that Way, for that all things ſhould be in a readineſs to give them a very goodly Entertainment. All the World knows, That there is nothing of more dangerous conſequence in *Italy*, than to offend a *Dominican*; becauſe, having the *Inquiſition* in their Hands, they commonly make

excellent uſe of it, to avenge the leaſt Affront is offer'd them: Wherefore theſe poor Wretches were fain to ſlink away in ſilence, without as much as daring to reply one Word, to this their Villainous Scoffing at them, after having treated them ſo outragiouſly. The famous and rich Hoſpital of *Loretto*, to which vaſt and immenſe Donations have been given in favour of *Pilgrims*, is for all that but little better ſerved, than that we have juſt now mention'd.

To this purpoſe I ſhall relate to you a Paſſage, whereof my ſelf was Witneſs when I was at *Loretto*. I was walking in the Great place which is between the Church and that Hoſpital, with two *French* Prieſts, who had Lodged there the Night before. The Guardians it ſeems are obliged to Ring a Bell, to gather the *Pilgrims* together before Supper, that none of them may be abſent: But theſe Wretches, that have no more Religion in them than Dogs, and whoſe only deſire is, to defraud and pinch the poor *Pilgrims*, had on purpoſe omitted Ringing of the Bell, as they often do. The *French* Prieſts about ſix of the Clock retir'd to the Hoſpital; where they demanded of them, why they did not come ſooner, and that Supper-time was paſt? They Excus'd themſelves by alledging, that they had not Rung the Bell for them: But they falſely and impudently maintain'd, that the Bell had been rung; ſo that it was not poſſible for them to obtain ſo much as a piece of Bread for themſelves that Night. The next Morning, theſe poor Prieſts were ſo fearful of being ſerv'd the ſame Trick, (for in that

that Hoſpital they are obliged to give their Viſitants Supper and Lodging for Three Nights together) that they continued from Three of the Clock in the Afternoon, until Evening, under the Belfry. The Guardians ſeeing, that it was impoſſible to put them by their Suppers, called them ſoftly (about Six of the Clock) to come into the Hall to Supper; which they very honeſtly refuſed to do till they had Rung the Bell, to give warning to the reſt of the *Pilgrims*: The Guardians, tho' enrag'd at this, yet durſt not but do it; but avenged themſelves another way, by giving them very bad Wine. In other parts of *Italy*, they make uſe of other Devices in their Hoſpitals, to affright *Pilgrims* from coming at them. At *Parma* and *Turin*, they oblige them (all Wearied as they are) to go in Proceſſion throughout the whole City, in the ſight of all Men, and to ſing Long Litanies; which makes perſons that have the leaſt ſpark of Generoſity, or thoſe who are naturally more ſhamefac'd than others, rather expoſe themſelves to lie in the Streets, yea, or periſh for Hunger, than to Viſit ſuch kind of Hoſpitals, where they muſt ſubject themſelves to ſuch odious Laws. Others make it their buſineſs to ſpoil and deface all the Paſsports of Strangers with great ugly black Marks they make upon them, as a ſign they have been entertain'd in ſuch and ſuch Hoſpitals: Now perſons that are any thing careful of preſerving their Honour in their own Country, and to keep their Paſsports neat and clean, will take care how they preſent themſelves to ſuch places as thoſe, whoſe Charity is ſo infa-

mouſly and ignominiouſly adminiſtred. In the mean time, by theſe ſcandalous Fetches, they make a ſhift to reduce their Gueſts to a very ſmall Number; for the fewer Viſitants they have in a Year, the greater is their Dividend at the Years end. Others have the Impudence, to make them gain that by their own Labour, which was deſtinated for them out of Charity: And indeed, generally every where, if they be not there preciſely at the Set-time, which ordinarily is an hour before Night, they are irrecoverably ſhut out of the Hoſpital; and it is impoſſible, either by Prayers or Tears, to procure any Entrance. Others again treat their Gueſts very rudely in their Diſcourſe, and with the greateſt Diſdain and Contempt imaginable. In a word, Charity is every where adminiſtred in ſo Uncharitable and Misbecoming a manner, that if the Benefactors of thoſe Hoſpitals could once return to Life, and have the poſſeſſion of their Goods they formerly bequeath'd to theſe places; I do perſwade my ſelf, that ſeeing the horrid Abuſes that are there practis'd, they would take heed of Undertaking the like Foundations for time to come.

The Father told me, That he had been in no place better Treated, than at a New Hoſpital that was a Building at *Mountefiaſcone*, Three days Journy from *Rome*. It was about Five or Six years ago, that the Prieſts of that place had been perſwading the Nobility and Citizens of that ſmall City, to contribute to this Foundation. They had already procur'd a conſiderable Revenue, by the pious Legacies of ſome Ladies of Quality, and ſome Annual Rents

Rents the City had granted towards it. The *Benedictin* ſeeing the good Entertainment they had given him, ſaid Smilingly to the Prieſts, who had the Direction of the Houſe, That he was very well ſatisfied with the good Entertainment he had received, that he prayed God to preſerve in them this Spirit of Charity for the Poor; and that he heartily wiſhed for the good of their Souls, that they might not one day become like others, by ſhearing the Revenues of the Hoſpital amongſt themſelves, and neglecting, and abuſing the Members of Jeſus Chriſt, as they do. Many Pilgrims have aſſured me, that it is the greateſt miſery in the World, to take up ones Lodging in any of the old Hoſpitals, notwithſtanding that they are the moſt Richly endowed; and that in the new Hoſpitals, they were well enough entertained, becauſe the Prieſts had not yet divided the Revenue amongſt themſelves. They do like the Gardiners, who ſuffer the Fruit to hang on the Tree, till it be come to its full growth and maturity, and then gather it, and make their profit of it: or like Merchants that Traffick in company, who do not divide the Purſe till it be full. All theſe external practices and ſhews of Piety and Devotion viſibly terminating in ſelf-intereſt, make it evident beyond diſpute, that they proceeded from no other Principles than Avarice and Hypocriſie. You may probably object to me here, Sir, that the *Italians*, whom I have elſewhere repreſented to you as men of Wit and Underſtanding, muſt needs be very ſimple in ſuffering themſelves to be perſuaded, to beſtow their Goods upon ſuch

Foundations as theſe, conſidering the great abuſe of them. To this, Sir, I ſhall anſwer, that the Prieſts in all Countries, have a very powerful Aſcendent over the Spirits of the people, and that this joyn'd with the Doctrin of the Church of *Rome*, which is, that the Prayers of Pilgrims are of a particular efficacy with God to deliver Souls out of Purgatory; and with the practice obſerved in theſe Hoſpitals, of obliging the Pilgrims at night to make long Prayers for the Souls of their deceaſed Benefactors, and cauſing Maſs to be ſaid for them in the Chappels belonging to the ſaid Hoſpitals, is a powerful motive, conſidering the falſe belief wherein they are engaged, to perſuade them to it. Moreover theſe Prieſts are very Dexterous in divulging every where, that they are very faithful in the Adminiſtration of their Alms, that they are very careful in giving good Entertainment to their Pilgrims, even ſo far as to contribute of their own Mony, to defray the charges they are at for Proviſions. But it is evident enough that by a mental reſtriction, they muſt underſtand this of Proviſions for themſelves, tho' before God they cannot by this means excuſe themſelves from lying. There was formerly many more Hoſpitals in *Italy* than there be at preſent, every Monaſtry had its Hoſpital. S. *Odon* Abbot of *Clugny*, ſeeing that theſe Hoſpitals were all in vogue, and that it was a kind of Devotion that made a great noiſe in the World, would not in this point come behind any Seculars. He divided the vaſt Revenues of his Abby into three parts; The firſt, was for the Abbot and the Entertainment

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of Strangers of note, that came to the Monaſtery; The ſecond, for the maintenance of the Monks, which was called the Conventual portion; and the third part for the relief of the Poor, and the Entertainment of Pilgrims, whoſe Feet the Abbot himſelf, as an effect of his humility, was pleaſed to waſh. Almoſt all the Abbots of *France*, *Germany* and *Italy* follow'd this Example; and in like manner made a Tripartition of the Revenues of their Abbies. But this their abundant Charity, was not of any long continuance; for ſoon after, that which had been given with one hand, was taken away with the other. The ſhare of the Poor was loſt, or rather confounded, with thoſe of the Abbot and the Monks: At preſent there are no more of theſe Hoſpitals to be found in *Italy*, excepting one, at *Mont-Caſſin*, and another at the Great *Camaldule*, where they entertain Pilgrims. The *Chartreux* Monks have alſo another in the Dutchy of *Milan*, at the Monaſtery of *Pavia*. But it is not to their Charity Strangers are beholden for this Convenience, but to that of *Galeacius* Viſcount, Duke of *Milan*, their Founder, who would have this Monaſtery, which he had endowed with a vaſt Revenue, to be a place of publick reception and Entertainment for all, whether Rich or Poor. The Fathers of this Foundation have ſince done their utmoſt endeavour, to rid themſelves of this Hoſpitality, under the ſpecious pretext, that it was a great diſturbance to their Solitude. But the Lords and great men of that Dutchy, who by the Charter of that Foundation, are to be ſplendidly entertained there with all their

Train and Equipage, as often as they paſs that way, found themſelves too much intereſſed in this their Petition, and therefore have always oppoſed it with all the Vigor imaginable; ſo that they are ſtill forced to continue the ſame, tho' ſore againſt their Wills. 'Tis a thing but too well known in *Italy*, and Avowed by all, that their Clergy are extreamly wanting in this great Duty, and diſtinguiſhing Chriſtian Badge of Charity. 'Tis an Obſervation I have made my ſelf, that the Poor, who are over and above perſwaded of this Truth, by their own experience, do ſeldom, or never beg any Alms of them. As for the Regular Clergy, the *Benedictin* told me, that from the time of our parting, he had preſented himſelf to all the Monaſteries of his Order he met with, to obtain a Lodging with them, but that ſcarce ever they had been willing to receive him: the Common anſwer he had from them was, that there was an Hoſpital in the City, to which he had beſt addreſs himſelf for Entertainment; and that when he came thither, they abſolutely refuſed him entrance, telling him there was a Monaſtery of his Order in the City, and that it was more proper for him to ſeek a Lodging there. Thus this poor Monk, ſeeing himſelf ſometimes rejected on all ſides, lamented his ſad Condition, occaſioned by the ſcandalous uncharitableneſs of the Clergy, and his own Brethren of the ſame Order. He added, that if it were in his power, he would aboliſh all theſe Hoſpitals, as well as all Pilgrimaging: For, ſaid he, as theſe Hoſpitals are moſt Scandalouſly Adminiſtred; ſo neither can any thing be imagined more Abomi-

Abominable, than the perſons that take up their Lodging in them; amongſt a ſcore of them, 'tis hard to find one, that is come from his own Country with a deſign to viſit the Holy places; being for the moſt part of them a company of Vagabonds, who make it their buſineſs, every year to go the round of *Italy*. They commonly paſs the Summer in the *Alpes*, and then begin their Journy in *Autumn*, ſpend their Winter at *Rome*, *Naples*, or in *Calabria*; and in the Spring begin their round a new, in order to return to their Summer Quarters in the Mountains. The way they take to Live is this, They beg in the day-time, go from one Farm to another, leap Hedges, Rob Orchards, and ſteal Fowl they meet with on the High-way, or in the back Courts of Country Houſes, or whatever elſe they meet with. After this good days work they retire towards the Evening to ſome Neighbouring Village, where they know there is an Hoſpital. Many of them Travel up and down thus with their whole Families, trailing their Wives and Children along with them. Theſe generally profeſs themſelves to be new Converts; that formerly they were either Jews or Proteſtants; but having abjured their Errors, they have thereby reduced themſelves into ſo miſerable a Condition, for the Love of Jeſus Chriſt. To this purpoſe they ſhew you very fair and plauſible Letters of *Credence*, with fair great Seals annexed to them. I have ſometimes diverted my ſelf with queſtioning this kind of People, about the Principles of Judaiſm, or the Faith of Proteſtants; but they were never able to anſwer

anſwer any thing to the purpoſe. Perceiving this, I came nearer to them, and demanded of them, how they came by theſe fair Commendatory Letters; whereupon ſome of them freely owned to me, that they had bought them for their Mony, of an Abbot living at *Turin*, who made a Trade and Livelyhood of it. That to this purpoſe he was furniſhed with all manner of Seals, and could Counterfeit all Writing hands. And as for themſelves, they ingenuouſly confeſſed they had never been either Jews or Proteſtants, but that they made uſe of this Artifice to induce people to a greater degree of Charity towards them: Beſides theſe we find many other ſorts of Hoſpital Haunters, that are never a jot better than thoſe, I have now mentioned: ſome of theſe drag great Chains after them, and Iron Manacles, declaring themſelves to have been Slaves in *Turky*, from whence they were Miraculouſly delivered, by ſome Vows they made to *Rome*, or to our Lady of *Loretto*: But if any one take them to task about thoſe remote Countries, they can anſwer nothing that is Pertinent; and beſides it is Notorious, that they buy their Chains of the Black-ſmiths, which many *Italians* have aſſured me, to have been Eye-witneſſes of. Moreover they are a ſort of people ſo diſſolute in their Manners, and ſo Debauched, that were it true indeed, that the Bleſſed Virgin had wrought a Miracle to deliver them from their Bondage, ſhe ought by another to return them thither again. Another ſort of Pilgrims well known in theſe Hoſpitals, are a kind of Hermits, of the Nature of thoſe two I mentioned before, who ſpend their time

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in Trouling from one place of Devotion to another, from *Rome* to *Loretto*, and from *Loretto* to *Rome*, leading a moſt ſcandalous Life. Theſe are the men, who without any Permiſſion obtained from their Biſhops to lead an Hermetick Life, have taken up the Habit of themſelves. I remember that at *Lions*, the Vicar General cauſed one of theſe Hermits to be ſeized, who in Priſon confeſſed, that he himſelf had given the Habit to Seventeen Vagabond Rogues like himſelf, for three Crowns a piece, in conſideration of which he had alſo furniſhed them with Cloth cut out, and ſowed their Gowns and Cowls himſelf, and given them counterfeit Letters to wander throughout *Germany* and *Italy*. Now it is obſervable that the Guardians of Hoſpitals do commonly give a better reception to thoſe ſort of Cattle, than to Paſſengers and Pilgrims, becauſe they know their Company is very apt to turn other peoples Stomacks from coming at them. Theſe are the ſeveral ſorts, and diviſions of Hoſpital-Mongers, which Houſes being beſides ordered after the manner I have informed you, judge, I pray you, Sir, Whether the Church of *Rome* has reaſon to be ſo huffy and proud of her Pilgrims and Hoſpitals, or to reproach the Proteſtants for wanting ſuch goodly Ornaments, and Teſtimonies of their Charity? For my part, I am firm in the Opinion, that the Proteſtants Method in this point is by far the better: They have very wiſely retrenched theſe ſorts of Pilgrimages, being convinced that it is much better for a man to ſhut himſelf up in his Cloſet, there to pray in ſecret to his Heavenly Father, than to run up and down

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to pray to God, and the Saints in Publick places, as the Romaniſts do. They know that God has not ty'd up Holineſs neither to time or place; and that it is a great piece of folly to found places of Entertainment for Vagabonds, which are for the moſt part either lazy Droons, or wicked Villains, which ought rather to be ſhut up in Houſes of Correction, and made to work for their Living, than to leave them at their Liberty, which they make ſuch ill uſe of it. As for what concerns Strangers and Travellers, if they happen to fall into ſome neceſſity, they are not wanting in Proteſtant Countries, charitably to aſſiſt them in their needs, eſpecially if they be known to be honeſt People. And as for the Poor and neceſſitous that dwell in Cities, the Pariſhes to which they belong take notice of what their wants are, and take care to ſupply them. This, Sir, as far as I can judge, is a far better regulated Charity, and conſequently alſo more pleaſing to God, and ſuch as was practiſed in the Primitive times of the Church. It may be, you'l tell me, Sir, that the Pilgrims of the Church of *Rome*, are not all of them ſuch pitiful Wretches as I have juſt now deſcrib'd, but that there are a vaſt number of Perſons of Quality, of different Ranks and Conditions, who Travel to *Rome* and *Loretto* upon the account of Devotion, in imitation of S. *Paul*, S. *Pelagia* and *Euſtochium*, Noble Roman Ladies, who undertook a *Jeruſalem* Voyage, to viſit the Holy places there, according to the Teſtimony of S. *Jerom*, and that ſuch as theſe are the Perſons whoſe Zeal your Church extreamly boaſts it ſelf of. I will not deny, Sir, but that

that indeed I have ſeen many Perſons of Quality going in Pilgrimage to *Rome*, and other places of Devotion that are moſt in Vogue in *Italy*, neither would I altogether diſapprove of their deſign, could I find that the objects to which they pay their Devotions, were in any degree worthy of them, and that they did it in a decent and edifying manner. But ſincerely to tell you my Opinion; I could never ſee any thing in all *Italy*, that deſerv'd a mans putting of himſelf to ſo great charges, except only to ſee its fair Cities, and the Maſterpieces of Art and Nature it contains: But in this caſe it is Curioſity, and not Devotion, that puts men upon undertaking that Journy. Beſides, Sir, the manner of your rich people going a Pilgrimaging is ſo Extravagant, and ſo fraught with ſtaring Libertiniſm and Licentiouſneſs, that in truth they had much better keep at Home, and Honour God in their Families, than to quit them, as they do, to ſatisfie their Luſts, under a Cloak of Devotion, to the great ſcandal of all good and ſober People. I queſtion not but you will be of my mind, as ſoon as you ſhall have read the account I intend to give you in my next LETTER, wherein I ſhall Treat of my Journy to *Loretto*. For the preſent, becauſe I have not quitted *Luca*, where I parted with my *Benedictin*, who has given me an occaſion to Write what I have done of Hoſpitals, I ſhall only tell you, before I part with this City, without giving you the Deſcription of it, that being no part of my deſign, that as I was one day coming forth from my Inn, I was extreamly ſurpriz'd, to hear the people in the Street Swearing

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and Blaſpheming the Holy Name of Jeſus Chriſt. There was a great throng of people gathered together, who look'd upon thoſe that did ſo, without witneſſing the leaſt Horror, for hearing ſuch execrable Blaſphemies. I demanded of them with ſome Indignation, why they ſuffered them to talk at ſuch a rate? They mildly anſwered me, that I was miſtaken, and that they did neither Swear nor Blaſpheme, but that it was only a particular quarrel, about a piece of Mony of the value of a Shilling or thereabouts, which at *Luca*, they call a Jeſus Chriſt. The Magiſtrates of this City cauſed this Mony to be Coyned, in Honour of a Miraculous Crucifix, which is kept in their Cathedral, which, they ſay, did either Weep, or Speak, or Bleed, theſe being the ordinary Miracles of theſe Crucifixes. The Figure of Jeſus Chriſt hanging on the Croſs, is Stamp'd upon this Coyn, which therefore they call a Chriſt. By which means when they are at play, or upon Quarrels ariſing about payments, the adorable Name of our Bleſſed Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, is not only very frequently taken in Vain, but alſo outrag'd and blaſphemed, as thoſe Wretches, whom I have juſt now mentioned, did for one of theſe pieces, which the one of them reſtor'd to the other with theſe Horrid words, take there your R —— of a Chriſt. I have ſeen another ſort of Mony at *Bononia* called a *Madonnin*, that is to ſay, an Our Lady, or a Virgin *Mary*, which is of the Value of Sixpence at *Bononia*, upon occaſion of which the ſame inconveniences do proportionably happen in the like Diſputes. Thus

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we ſee, that an imprudent Devotion ordinarily terminates in a great Impiety. The Queen of *Sweden* having ſeen one of theſe pieces of Mony, ſaid Smilingly to the Cardinal of *Luca*, *That the* Italians *would have done much better, to have ſtampt a Coin, and beſtowed the Name of God upon it*; intimating, That *Gold* and *Silver* were the God of *Italy*, there being no people in the World that worſhip it with more Idolatry, and yet that are more lazy and careleſs in the gaining of it. From *Luca* I came to *Piſa*, an ancient City of *Tuſcany*, ſituate upon the River *Arno*. Amongſt other remarkable things, here is to be ſeen a fair Church-yard, call'd in Italian, *Campo Santo*; it is exceeding large, and of a ſquare Figure. The Walls and Tombs of it are all of *Marble*, *Jaſper*, and *Porphyry*, very artificially wrought. They of *Piſa* had fill'd this place with the Earth, which in a great number of Veſſels they brought from *Jeruſalem*, and in which the Dead-Bodies are conſumed in 24 Hours. In a word, they tell us, that this Holy-Earth is nothing but a continual Miracle: But for my part, I find no more of Miracle in the caſe, than there is in the Church-yard of S. *Innocents* at *Paris*, where Bodies are conſumed within the ſame compaſs of Time, without any Miracle at all. In all their Churches they ſhew us a prodigious number of Relicks of Saints and Sainteſſes, as in all the reſt of *Italy*, the moſt of which are extreamly Ridiculous. I will not ſtop at preſent to give you a Catalogue of them, but will paſs on to *Florence*, where I ſhall have occaſion to entertain you with the *Great Devotion*, that is ſo much

much in Vogue and Credit at a Church called the *Annonciade*, or *Annunciation*. The Original of the *Devotion* take as follows: A Painter having been employ'd to make a Picture of the *Bleſſed Virgin*, in the poſture wherein the *Romiſh* Tradition tells us ſhe was, when the Angel *Gabriel* was ſent to her, to acquaint her with the Incarnation of the *Word*; that is, in her Chamber on her Knees, reading the Prophecy of *Iſaiah*: The Painter had finiſhed all other parts of the Picture, except one, to wit, the Virgins Face, which he had reſerved for his laſt Task; but being at a loſs what Idea to follow, in repreſenting to the Life ſo excellent a Creature; and deſparing ever to find any thing in his Art of ſufficient perfection to reach this height, he in this trouble and diſcompoſure of Thoughts fell aſleep in the Church, where he was at Work; and awaking three or four hours after, (O ſtrange Prodigy! and well deſerving the Wonder of all men!) he found the Thing that had ſo much perplexed him happily finiſhed, and much better than ever he could hope to have done it himſelf; whereupon he began to cry out amain, *A Miracle, a Miracle*! highly averring, that an Angel ſent from Heaven had done the work whilſt he was aſleep. The Fryers of the Convent where he Wrought, finding their Intereſt in the thing, rang'd themſelves of his Side, ſo that in a moment the *Devotion* took fire, and the Concourſe of people to their Church was ſo great, and has ever ſince continu'd with ſuch extraordinary Succeſs, as hath made it at this day one of the richeſt of all *Italy*; and the Convent of Fryers, one of the beſt

Endow'd

Endow'd. The Reflections I have made on this Picture, is, That on many Accounts all this might be no more than a meer Cheat or Miſtake. For firſt of all, ſome unknown Perſon, or rather Fryar of skill in that Art, entring by chance into the Chappel where the Painter was at work, and finding him aſleep, might make uſe of that opportunity, and having finiſh'd the work, retire himſelf before the Painter awoke. Secondly, We may ſuppoſe that the Painter, to make himſelf talk'd of, and to gain himſelf the credit and reputation of a good Man, might have invented this Lie himſelf. Or laſtly, We may conceive that the Fryars of the Convent, upon conſideration of a good piece of mony, might have induc'd him to have publiſh'd this Lie, to make their Advantage of it. What I alledge here, that might have been, is not done with this intent, as if I had a mind by all manner of ways to diſgrace and diſcredit this pretended Miracle, by ſuppoſing it a piece of Forgery. I know it is the Character of a diſingenuous and malicious Spirit, to put a bad Conſtruction upon a Matter that admits a favourable one, and verily, I would not for all the World expoſe my ſelf to that Reproach. But the reaſon of what I have ſaid concerning this matter is, That I am otherwiſe ſatisfied on good grounds, that the Point in queſtion is a manifeſt and palpable Falſhood. For firſt of all, If it were an Angel, as is pretended, that had painted this Face of the *Virgin*, as the work of an Angel is far more perfect than that of a Man, it will follow, That this Picture, at leaſt as to the mixture and

laying on of the Colours, muſt have far excell'd all the Pieces of *Caratche*, *Guido*, *Rhin*, or any other of the moſt famous Painters of *Italy*; and in the mean time we ſee the contrary, and that it does not at all exceed the reſt of the Pictures, finiſhed by the Painter himſelf, which made a Traveller (who ey'd it very well) to ſay, That the Angel-Limner muſt have been but a Blockhead and Bungler at his Art, to draw ſuch rude and incurious Stroakes. But beſides this, we have another Argument to convince the *Romaniſts*, that this is a falſe Suppoſition; which is, That this Portraiture of the *Bleſſed Virgin*, bears no reſemblance at all with thoſe other Pictures of the *Virgin*, which they pretend to have been drawn by the Hand of S. *Luke* himſelf. The Face here is round, fair, and ruddy, with lively and brisk Eyes, and a low ſmooth Forehead; whereas that painted by S. *Luke* is long and ſwarthy, *Egyptian*-like, with an humble and modeſt look; and an high and prominent Forehead, and which has nothing of that ſo charming Beauty of the *Bleſſed Virgin*, they ſo highly magnifie when they ſpeak of her, being more proper to excite Senſual Luſt, than any Sentiments of Devotion. Wherefore we muſt conclude, That either this Angel was miſtaken, or that S. *Luke* was a great *Ignoramus* in the Art of *Painting*; which notwithſtanding they tell us, he was skilful in, to perfection; for, without doubt, the one or the other muſt have been fouly miſtaken. To attribute this miſtake to the Angel, would be to derogate extreamly, and againſt all Reaſon, from the tranſcendent Excellence of thoſe Bleſſed

Bleſſed Spirits; and to accuſe S. *Luke*, would deſtroy their own Tradition; which they ought not ſo far to vilifie and debaſe, as to make it give way to the particular Teſtimony of a ſilly Painter, who may be a Liar, as well as ſo many others; I ſpeak of him who drew this Picture of the *Annunciation*. Laſtly, it might alſo as well be alledg'd, That the Devil, for the incouragement and increaſe of *Superſtition*, might have had a Finger in the Intrigue, as ſo peremptorily to aſſert, That it was an Angel of Light; tho' to ſpeak the truth, this is not very rational neither, for the Devil is too cunning to have done his work ſo much at random, and would without doubt rather have borrow'd his Idea from the Picture of *Sancta Maria Magiore* at *Rome*. However the Popes have declared it to be a Truth, they have approv'd the Matter, and have iſſued their *Bulls* for the Authorizing of it, and thunder'd out their Excommunications againſt thoſe who ſhould be ſo foolhardy to doubt of it, being the ſame that other Popes have done in favour of the Picture of S. *Luke*. This *Devotion* has procur'd vaſt Treaſures to the Fathers of this Convent, called *Serviti*. The Great Duke of *Tuſcany* repair'd thither every Evening to ſay his Prayers, whilſt I was at *Florence*, and it is the common Rendezvous of Strangers, that have a mind to ſee this Court. He every day gave great Alms to the Poor at the Door of the Church, who all of them, (as I was told) were perſons very well to live, tho' (to induce people more to compaſſion) they keep themſelves cover'd with nothing but Rags. They have taken ſuch firm poſſeſſion of this

Poſt, that they will not ſuffer any ſtrange Beggar to mingle with them. By occaſion of mentioning theſe Beggars, and that you may ſomewhat the better apprehend the powerful Virtue of the Holy Image, and the Miracles the *Virgin* continually works in favour of thoſe, who repair thither to pay her their Adorations, I'le here relate to you a Miracle which they cry'd along the Streets of *Florence*, as a thing that had lately hapned, which Print my Curioſity prompted me to buy. The Story ſeem'd to me very Gallant, and tho' it be ſomething long, yet I hope the Recital will not ſeem tedious to you.

A Gentleman of one of the beſt Families of *Florence*, was fallen from a flouriſhing Condition, by means of ſome croſs Blaſts of Fortune, to extream Poverty. That which greatly added to his Affliction was, That he had two grown Daughters that were not yet provided for; his only recourſe in this miſerable condition, was to the Mother of God. And to enter himſelf the better into her Favour, he made a Vow to continue all his Life long very devout to her miraculous Image of the *Annunciade*: To this purpoſe he roſe very early every morning, and went to ſay his Prayers in the Church-Porch, before the Doors were open'd. After he had continued his Devotion thus for a long time, the *Bleſſed Virgin* thought good at laſt to hear his Prayers, and to ſend him ſome Relief. Accordingly ſhe inſpir'd two Blind-men, of the number of thoſe who always kept about the Door of the Church, to riſe ſooner than ordinary, to take their Stations in the Church-Porch:

Being

Being arriv'd there, one of them began to tell his Companion, how much he was beholden to the miraculous *Virgin*, for that from extream Poverty, he had in a ſhort time attain'd to competent Riches, by the Alms he had received there; and that beſides the mony in ſilver he had left at his Lodging, he had Two hundred Piſtols in gold quilted in the Crown of his Hat. His blind Comrade having heard this his Diſcourſe, told him, That for his part he did not in the leaſt envy his good luck, as being much more obliged to the miraculous Image, and that he had quilted in his Hat no leſs than five hundred Piſtols in gold. The Gentleman who was near to them at his Prayers, without making the leaſt noiſe, that might diſcover him to be there, having heard them diſcourſing at this rate, and ſeeing ſo fair an opportunity offer'd him of enriching himſelf, very ſoftly drew near to the two Blind-men, and very dexterouſly took off both their Hats at once, retiring ſome paces backward. The Blind-men being extreamly ſurpriz'd hereat, and each of them believing his Companion had done the Feat, demanded their Hats of one another, and proceeded to ſuch a Rage, that handling their Crutches, they diſcharg'd ſeveral hearty ſtrokes upon one anothers Heads; and without doubt had kill'd one another, if people had not come in to part them. Whilſt they were thus hotly engag'd, the Gentleman went off, and finding ſome ſcruple in himſelf for what he had done, he goes the ſame day to the Cardinal, Archbiſhop of *Florence*, to whom he told all that had paſt: The Archbiſhop having heard

the Relation, did fully approve of what he had done; and told him, That he was not at all obliged to make any Reſtitution, foraſmuch as it was apparent, that the Virgin had viſibly aſſiſted him in the whole courſe of that Affair, in conſideration of the Devotion he bore to her miraculous Portraiture; and ordered, that for the comfort of the Faithful, it ſhould be printed and publiſh'd throughout the City of *Florence*. This ſame Story has ſince been printed anew, in a Book which is very currant in *Italy*, and has for its Title, *L'Utile col Dolci*, or, *Profit with Pleaſure*. You ſee here, Sir, a very pleaſant miracle, wherein the *Virgin*, to pleaſure one of her Servants, makes a robber of him, and who, as ſuch, ought to be puniſhed according to the Laws. For by what means ſoever theſe poor Blind-men might have pick'd up this mony, however theirs it was, and had been given them for Alms. But if we ſuppoſe this, to be a Story invented at pleaſure, I am aſtoniſh'd, that a Cardinal-Archbiſhop ſhould ever cauſe it to be printed; and that the *Inquiſition*, which in all other matters appear ſo exact and ſcrupulous, ſhould Licence the Impreſſion of it in the Book before-mentioned. People are ſo cloy'd with Miracles in *Italy*, that except they contain ſome thing Romantick and Fabulous, they are ſcarcely taken notice of. This is that which makes the *Italians*, who not without great Reaſon are accuſed of Coyning new ones every day, to have a great care to ſet them out with ſuch rare and ſurprizing, or ſuch merry and pleaſing Circumſtances, that it is very divertizing

tizing to read them, or hear them related. I may have an occaſion to give you a more particular Account hereof in one of my LETTERS; and therefore ſhall at preſent paſs over in ſilence the many Miracles of this famous Church of the *Annunciade*, to give you an account of ſome Places of Devotion, which are not far diſtant from the City of *Florence*, and which I had the curioſity to go and viſit.

'Tis amongſt the high Mountains of the *Apennine*, that we meet with three famous Deſerts, at a days Journy diſtance from each other, where as many Heads of different Orders had their beginning. The firſt of theſe is *Camaldule*, the ſecond *Valombroſa*, and the third *Mont-Alverne*. Of theſe *Camaldule* has by way of preheminence been called the *Holy Deſert*, and is certainly one of the moſt Deſert places Nature can produce. S. *Romualdus* obtain'd this place of an Earl, called *Maldule*, from whence it took its Name of *Camaldule*, as being a kind of abbreviation of *Campmaldule*, or the Field of *Maldule*. Hither it was then, that he retir'd to lead a penitent Life; and having by his example engaged ſome Diſciples to joyn with him, he built there a Monaſtery upon a very high Mountain, in an Interval lying between two Tops or Prominences thereof; and afterwards being deſirous of a greater Solitude, he retired to one of thoſe Tops, which is a place almoſt inacceſſible: where he inſtituted a kind of Double Order, one of *Monks*, and the other of *Solitaries* or *Hermits*; but under the ſame Habit and Rule, excepting

only ſome particular Conſtitutions to the one, with reference to the Hermetick Life; and to the others, for the Monaſtick. The Monks dwelt in the Monaſtery he had built below, and the Solitaries retir'd with him to the Top, which at preſent is called the *Holy Deſert*. I arrived at this Monaſtery in the beginning of *October*. From *Florence* it is in a manner a continual Up-hill thither, and from thence one may diſcover that great and lofty City, with the Country all about it, which affords a moſt pleaſing Proſpect. Theſe Fathers have always preſerved Hoſpitality amongſt them, and to this day entertain all Strangers that come thither, and Treat them according to their Quality for three days together. Foraſmuch as there is neither Inn, nor any Houſes near it, I went and preſented my ſelf to the Abby, where I was very civilly received. I found here three *Florentine* Gentlemen, to whoſe Company I joyn'd my ſelf, and at Night we were ſerved at Table with *Eggs* and *Fiſh*, without any Superfluity, but with a mediocrity well-becoming the Religious ſtate of theſe Fathers, with which I was much more edified than I had been at the *Citeaux* in *France*, where the Abbot treated us with ſo much profuſion and Exceſs. We acquainted them over night, that we deſigned the next day to go to the *Sacred Deſert*; and accordingly they called us up at five of the Clock the next morning, and made us ſit down to eat at ſix. I was extreamly ſurpriz'd to ſee they had prepar'd Dinner ſo early, when none of us had the leaſt Appetite to Meat:

But

But they told us, That we muſt force our ſelves to eat as well as we could, becauſe the Air was ſo piercing and cold in climbing up to the top of the Mountain, that we ſhould never be able to bear it, if we attempted it with empty Stomachs. Moreover, That we were to prepare our ſelves to clamber on foot for ſix miles together on the Rocks, and to march through the Snow, before we could come to the top of the *Holy Deſert*, and that there they never gave any meat to any perſon, to avoid diſturbing of their Solitude; ſo that we ſhould be forced to come down from thence by the ſame way to the Monaſtery, there to take a ſecond Refreſhment. We ſuffered our ſelves therefore to be perſuaded, and after we had eaten we parted from the Monaſtery about ſeven of the Clock, and walked on towards the top, always compaſſing the Mountain, in a continued Foreſt of tall *Fir-Trees*. All theſe Rocks are full of little Springs, from whence iſſueth a very clear Water, whoſe Rivulets diſperſe themſelves all over the way by which we went; ſo that one cannot climb very high without marching in the Water, which is very troubleſom. Theſe Waters meeting together form a conſiderable Torrent, which we paſs'd and repaſs'd upon great *Fir-Trees* laid over in the form of Bridges. We arrived about Noon at the top, after having marched two miles through the Snow. This was in the month of *October*; but the top of the Mountain is ſo cold, that when it rains below, it almoſt continually ſnows here on high. We found the Snow very high

high there, and had been ſo for eight days; ſo that at a diſtance we could ſee nothing but the upper part of the Church, and the Tiles or Covering of the Cells; we counted about ſixty of them, which are about twenty Paces diſtant from one another, and taken all together from a little Town: Every Cell hath ſeveral Rooms, and a Garden. They ſhew'd us that of St. *Romuald*, which one of the Hermits dwelt in. We asked them why they bore no greater reſpect to the Cell of their happy Founder, but left it to one of their Religious to live in? They told us that this was the only way they had to preſerve it againſt the moiſture the place was obnoxious to; and that otherwiſe the Wood would rot, and the Cell be in danger of falling down. They ſhew'd us the Cell of a venerable Hermit, who (they aſſur'd us) had not ſtirr'd thence for forty years together, and who ſtill liv'd there in perpetual ſilence, not ſo much as ſpeaking a Word to any one. They put in his Meat to him through a little Window, which he took with great ſobriety and moderation. Theſe Solitaries eſteem'd him a Saint, for they value ſilence above all other Vertues: Which gave me occaſion to demand of thoſe who were ordered to accompany us, what kind of thing this great Vertue of *Silence* was, and how they defin'd it? They anſwered, That it was to be ſilent with Men, in order to ſpeak to God. Whereupon I reply'd, That it ſeem'd to me to be better defin'd thus; *To be ſilent, or to ſpeak when one ought*; *and that I could not approve of the*

Uſe

Uſe they had introduc'd amongſt them of ſpeaking to one another by ſigns. We our ſelves indeed had but newly experienced the Inconveniencies of it, at our firſt Entrance into the *Holy Deſert*; for having found the Court Gate open, we went in to rights; but when we were entred, not knowing which way to betake our ſelves, we drew near to ſome of theſe Solitaries, who were buſie in removing of the Snow to make a paſſage. We deſired them to be ſo kind, as to tell us, to whom we might addreſs our ſelves for to take a view of the place; but not ſo much as one of them opened their mouths to give us a word in anſwer. Some of them made ſigns to us with their hands and feet, and others with their brooms and ſhovels. We believed at firſt that they were Fools, or that they had a mind to drive us out again; but at laſt we apprehended that they made ſigns to us to return to the Gate, and there ſpeak with the Porters; with whom we happily met. I immediately told theſe Porters, That it appear'd to me very ſtrange, that God having given to men a Tongue and a Mouth, wherewith to expreſs their Thoughts, ſome perſons, inſtead of acknowledging this Advantage God had given them above Brute-beaſts, by a good and diſcreet uſe thereof, ſhould undertake to make uſe of their Hands and Feet to expreſs themſelves, like thoſe that are Dumb-born, or that have their Tongues cut out. That at the beſt this ſeem'd to me very improper, and very far from appearing to be a Vertue, fit to make Men Good and Holy.

They

They anſwered me, *That theſe were Myſteries hid and unknown to Seculars, and only revealed by God to Solitaries and Perfect Souls, who knew the Excellence of it. The Sins* (proceeded he) *of the Men of the World, are groſs Sins, ſuch as* Covetouſneſs, Envy, Luxury, Blaſphemy, &c. *but as for us, our greateſt Sins are, when ſometimes by Frailty we do break our Obſervance of Silence; to walk with too much haſte and precipitation; to caſt ſome curious (tho' Innocent) Looks; to be ſlovenly in our Habits; to have preferr'd ſometime Vocal, to Mental Prayer; to have been too much pleaſed with the Taſte of Heavenly Comfort, or too heavy and caſt down under Sufferings.* I ſeem'd to perceive in theſe his Anſwers, ſomething of pride and haughtineſs, and that ſmelt ſtrong of a Phariſaical *Non ſum ſicut cæteri hominum; I am not like other Men*; and which made me fear that *Pride* (having been the ſin of the Angels in Heaven) might probably alſo be the ſin of theſe Solitaries here on the top of the Mountain. And indeed, ſo far were all theſe dazling ſhews of Piety from making me conceive any Inclination for theſe material Solitudes, which ſeem'd ſo much to facilitate the practice thereof, that on the contrary, it made me conceive a greater Love for an ordinary and humble Life in the World, accompanied with all thoſe pious practices which in ſuch a Life we have continual Opportunities to exert. It appear'd to me, That theſe Solitaries plac'd the whole and main of Godlineſs in ſome trifling Obſervances, which yet are powerful enough to make

make them wander from the paths of that Charity they ought to have for thoſe who are engaged in the Commerce of the World, as looking upon them no otherwiſe than as men that are in the high-way to utter Perdition, and for whom there is almoſt no hope of Salvation. Surely ſuch Thoughts as theſe cannot be ſaid to comply with *Charity*; for without doubt, ſome Seculars living in the World, are as acceptable in the Eyes of God as theſe Hermits on the Mountains. The Porters told us, *That three times a week they of the Monaſtery below brought up Viands, and other neceſſary Proviſions, for the ſuſtenance of thoſe who lived in the Sacred Deſert.* At laſt, they conducted us to the Church, which is very little and narrow, all lin'd and wainſcoted with Wood againſt the moiſture and great coldneſs of the place. They aſſured us, *That ſome certain Winters, the Cells, Church and all, were wholly buried in the Snow, and that they were fain to hollow themſelves out Paſſages below through the Snow, making ſome holes to the top to let in the light, for to paſs from one Cell to another, which then appeared like ſo many great white Vaults.* They told us, *That all the while they live under the Snow, they are very little ſenſible of the Cold; but to preſerve themſelves from the ill effects of the moiſture, they keep good Wood fires, that burn day and night, as having very near them vaſt Foreſts of* Pine, Cheſnut, *and* Fir-Trees, *which do furniſh them with Wood in great Abundance.* After we had viſited the Church, we returned by the ſame way

we

we came, and arrived at the Abby about five a Clock in the Evening, where we were civilly entertained as before. 'Tis only this Monaſtery that is ſtill maintained in good Obſervance; all other Monks of the ſame Order, who have many Monaſteries in *Italy*, lead a very ſcandalous Life. We parted thence the next day, after that we had return'd our Thanks to theſe Fathers, and knowing that the Abby of *Valombroſa*, which is chief of another Order of Monks, very famous in *Italy*, was not above a days Journy from thence, we all of us travell'd thither. We went down Hill for ſome miles, and afterwards coaſted about the *Apennin*, by a very pleaſant way. We travell'd a great way through Woods of *Olive-Trees*, all loaden with *Olives*, and ever and anon met with ſmall Hills full of *Orange* and *Citron Trees*, full hung with *Citrons* and *Oranges*. Some of them are ſo high that a Man on Horſe-back may paſs under them, without touching the Branches. After they have been once planted, they grow without ſtanding in need of any Art or Husbandry. All theſe ſides of the Mountains are exceeding rich, as abounding with all ſorts of *Fruit-Trees*, and at the bottom of every one of theſe Trees, there is the ſtock of a Vine that embraceth it, and enterlacing its Branches with thoſe of the Tree, does at the Seaſon make a very pleaſant mixture of its Grapes with the Fruit. After half a days Journy, we were oblig'd to mount the *Apennin*, for four miles together, through very ſtony and rugged ways, until we came to *Valombroſa*, in Latin *Vallis Umbroſa*. This place is indeed

indeed a Valley with reſpect to the Tops of the Mountains, that raiſe themſelves a great hight above it; but if we compare it, with the Level of the Country that lies beneath, it is a very high Mountain, and very cold, for there are no Fruit-Trees to be ſeen here, except only ſome *Cheſtnut-Trees*, and a few *Apple-Trees*. The great Foreſts of *Pine* and *Fir-Trees* that encompaſs it, in former times rendred the place very dark and ſhady, which was the occaſion of giving it the name of *Valombroſa*. S. *John Gualbert* made choice of this place for his retirement. He naturally was a Lover of theſe kind of places, and in all his Travels, whenſoever he met with any dark Wood, or very Solitary place, he caſt in his mind, ſome time or other to come and fix his abode there, and to be the founder of a Monaſtery. I am frequently oblig'd in my Letters, in compliance with the Exigency of my matter, to relate to you ſeveral vicious and wicked Actions of the *Italian* Prieſts and Monks; a thing very contrary to my Natural inclination, which prompts me to conceal the ill, and to publiſh only the good. Wherefore a little to refreſh my wearied Pen, and to comply with the deſire I have to honour the Memory of great men, you'l give me leave, Sir, I hope, to give my ſelf the Satisfaction of relating to you an Action truly Vertuous and Memorable of S. *John Gualbert*. This yound Lord had a Brother, whom he moſt tenderly loved, who being engaged in a Duel, was unhappily killed by his Rival. *Gualbert* ſuppoſed it would be an Action worthy of his Honour, and great

great Courage, to endeavour to avenge the Death of his Brother. To this purpoſe he engaged himſelf in purſuit of this *Homicide*, who being fled, he went in queſt of him throughout all the Provinces of *Italy*. It hapned at length that he met with him diſarmed in a way where he could not eſcape him. The unhappy Wretch ſeeing him come towards him, with his drawn Sword in his hand, caſt himſelf proſtrate on the Ground, crying for mercy; but perceiving by his thundering voice, and his inflamed looks, that there was no quarter to be hoped for, laid his Arms a croſs his Breaſt, in expectation of the mortal Thruſt. *Gualbert* ſeeing him in this poſture, called to mind our Lord Jeſus Chriſt hanging on the Croſs, who was ſo far from avenging himſelf, that he not only prayed for his Perſecutors, but died for them. This Thought having quite ſpoil'd his former deſign, he alights from his Horſe, and inſtead of Running his Enemy through, he freely forgave him, kiſſed him, and embraced him, and tendered him ever after as his own Brother. If the *Italians* and other Papiſts, in ſtead of amuſing themſelves about the Superſtitious worſhip of their Saints, would once apply themſelves to imitate theſe lovely Examples of their Vertues, they would without doubt render themſelves more acceptable to God, neither would they be found ſo baſely and abominably Avenging themſelves as they do. I return now to my Solitude of *Valombroſa*: We arrived at this famous Abby, where are ſome of the moſt magnificent and ſumptuous Buildings that can be. One

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of the *Florentine* Gentlemen that was with me had a Brother there, who was the chief Perſon there, next to the Abbot, for whoſe ſake we were very civilly received. The Monks here lead a very commodious and pleaſant Life; when they are weary of living in this Deſert, they make an Enterchange with the Monks of *Florence*, and thereby enjoy the pleaſing variety of living one part of the year in the Country, and the other in the City. They have cut down for a quarter of a League round their Monaſtery all the great Fir-Trees that ſhadowed it, to give themſelves more Air, and to make the place more healthy. The next morning we were led to the Hermitage of S. *John Gualbert*, which is at about half a Leagues diſtance, upon the point of a little Rock, which lifts up it ſelf in the midſt of the Valley, being verry craggy on every ſide. In getting up to it, we went round the Rock as by a winding Stairs for the ſpace of about a quarter of an hour, at the end of which, we found our ſelves at the top of the Rock; where the Hermitage is; which conſiſts of a very neat Chappel, curiouſly Gilt and Painted all over, and a very handſome Set of Lodgings, well wainſcoted and painted all within, with a Garden of a moderate ſize, ſo that the whole is a meer Jewel. There is no Monument left here of the ancient Cell of this Saint, all the Buildings being New and Modern: There is always a Father Hermit that dwells here with a Converſe Brother to ſerve him. Whenever the Hermit dies, the Abbots of the Congregation of *Valombroſa*, at their general Chapter, make choice

of a Monk, of exemplary Life, and a Lover of Solitude, to reſide there. The great Abby is to furniſh him with all Neceſſaries of Life: He has a very fine Library full of choice Books, when he has a mind to ſtudy; and indeed the Hermit that was then in poſſeſſion of the place, was a man of competent Learning, and appeared to me a very honeſt man. He made us a very fine Diſcourſe about the Contempt of the World, and the Advantages of Retirement and Solitude: Tho' indeed there was no great need of it, for we were already, without all that, ſo charmed with the Beauty of this Hermitage, that in caſe there had been more of the ſame cut, Nature, rather than Grace, would eaſily have perſuaded us to become Hermits, in order to enjoy an eaſie and pleaſant Life, without either care or trouble. The Monks of *Valombroſa* have extreamly relaxed the ſtrictneſs of their firſt Inſtitution. They are cloathed in Black, and profeſs the Rule of S. *Bennet*, tho' indeed they obſerve but little of it. The next day we ſet out very betimes in the morning towards Mount *Alverne*. This is the place where the Seraphick Father S. *Francis*, Founder of all the Religious Orders that live under his Rule, retir'd himſelf to ſpend his Life in Contemplation, and where, as they tell us, he received the Impreſſion of the ſacred Wounds. This days Journy was exceeding troubleſome to us: We went up from *Valombroſa*, by the direction of a Guide we took along with us, to the very top of the *Appennin*, and continued our way upon the ſame, till we came to the foot of *Alverne*. This

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Mountain is diſcovered at a great diſtance, and ſome maintain it to be the higheſt of all the *Alpennin*. It hath nothing that is pleaſing or delightful about it, neither is any thing to be ſeen here beſides bare Rocks, without either Trees or Verdure. It is ſo high that it ſeldom or never Rains there, which was the reaſon we found no Snow here. We got up to it with a great deal of trouble and difficulty, by a very narrow way between extream high Precipices, and we could not gain the top of it, till it was in a manner quite dark night. Here we found a large Convent of Religious, of the Order of S. *Francis*, called by the *Italians Soccolanti*, becauſe of the wooden Socks they were inſtead of Shoes. The firſt thing we did was to enquire where we might lodge for that night: The Fathers told us, there was an Inn cloſe by for the Entertainment of Strangers. Formerly theſe Religious exerciſed Hoſpitality towards all ſorts of Perſons, that out of Devotion came to *Alverne*, as the Fathers of *Camaldule* do to this day to thoſe who come to viſit the Holy Deſert, whereof I have ſpoken before; but at preſent they are weary of this piece of Service, and do employ the Fund deſtinated to that purpoſe to their own Advantage. By bad hap for us, there was no body in the Inn, the Inn-keeper with all his Family, being gon to a Wedding a days Journy from the place; ſo that we were obliged to return to the Convent, and entreat the Fathers to afford us ſome ſhelter amongſt them for that night, ſince there was no other place for us to beſtow our ſelves. The Fathers ſeeing no re-

medy granted our Requeſt, but with ſo much averſneſs and ill-will, that we could not but wonder to ſee that perſons, who for the moſt part live upon the Alms that are abundantly contributed to them by Seculars, ſhould refuſe to aſſiſt them upon occaſion. They ſhewed us a Chamber where we might lye, but as for affording us any thing to Eat, they deſired our excuſe, telling us that they had none for themſeves; being thus reſolved to leave us without either Meat or Fire, tho' the nights be exceeding cold there, upon the pretence of the trouble they had in getting their Wood, as being oblig'd to fetch it from the foot of the Mountain. We deſired them at leaſt to be ſo kind to give us leave to enter their Kitchin for to warm our ſelves a little at their common Fire: but they being very loath that we ſhould ſee the good Proviſions they had there prepared for themſelves, told us that they could not grant our requeſt, becauſe they had ſome of their Fathers that were ſick about the Fire, ſaying of their Office. One of the *Florentine* Gentlemen that was in our Company, knowing that the Convent was never deſtitute of Proviſions, broke out into a Paſſion againſt the Guardian, and reproaching him with his baſe Incivility, told him, That he conſtantly three times a week ſent a good quantity of Bread and Wine to their great Convent at *Florence*, but that he was reſolv'd to ſtop his Hand for time to come, and give them the bag, and that moreover he himſelf would acquaint them with the Reaſon moving him ſo to do. This advertiſement made the Guardian preſently change his

his note, and having excuſed himſelf for what was paſt in conſideration of the Benefactor of his Order, he himſelf conducted us into the Kitchin, where in ſtead of theſe ſick Fathers, and mumblers of their Offices, we found there four or five fat and bonny Fryars playing at Dice, a great Pot boyling over the Fire, beſides ſeveral Joynts of Meat a roaſting. One of theſe Fryars ſeeing us come in, very nimbly ſnatch'd up the Dice and Boxes into his Gown; but a while after forgetting himſelf, roſe up, and let all tumble down on the ground. The Father Guardian perceiving the miſchance had hapned, excuſed them the beſt he could, telling us, that having been that day a great way off a Preaching, to refreſh themſelves they had made bold with a little Recreation. In fine, they made us ſup with them, and we were very well treated. After Supper they conducted us to our Chamber, where we found a very good Fire. The next day one of theſe Fathers accompanied us to ſhew us the holy places of Mount *Alverne*. We were extreamly ſurprized to ſee the ſurface of this Mountain, which we had not had the time the night before to take notice of, becauſe it was very late when we arrived. The whole Mountain is nothing elſe but a company of Rocks heaped one upon another, and all cleft aſunder, forming as many hideous Precipices, which cannot be viewed without horror. Some believe that theſe Rocks were rent aſunder at the Death of our Lord: S. *Francis* was of this mind, when he pitched upon this place for his Retirement, to meditate upon the ſacred Myſteries of the Paſſion. They

ſhewed us the place where the Hiſtory of his Life tells us, that Jeſus Chriſt appear'd to him in the form of a Seraphim on the Croſs, and imprinted in his Hands, his Feet, and his Side, the five wounds were given him on the Croſs, to the end it might be ſaid, that S. *Francis* had ſuffered as much as he. But indeed, according to this account, he would have ſuffered much more; for the ſame Legend adds, that he ſuffered even till his Death, the Pains of Jeſus Chriſt as ſenſibly, as Jeſus Chriſt felt them, when he received them on the Croſs; and that from that time forward the Life he lived was continued by a perpetual Miracle, which preſerved his Life in the midſt of a continual Death. For my part, I find this pretended Apparition of Jeſus Chriſt like a Seraphim with Wings, extreamly improper, not to ſay ridiculous; why not rather in his Human form? He that would not take upon him the Nature of Angels, ſhall we believe that he would ever take their Figure? And would not this highly favour the Opinion of thoſe Ancient Hereticks, who maintain'd, That the Son of God had only taken upon him an Aiery and Phantaſtical Body? And to ſpeak my mind, I believe that this Impreſſion of the Wounds, was only perform'd in the ſtrong Imagination of S. *Francis*, much like ſome others have imagin'd, that they had Feet of Wax, and a Head of Glaſs. The place where it is ſaid that this miraculous Operation was Celebrated, is under a great Stone, whereof the one end only is wedg'd into the Rocks, yet ſo as according to my Underſtanding is ſufficient for its Support.

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Nevertheleſs theſe Fathers every where proclaim this for a great Miracle, and that it cannot be conceived but that naturally the Stone muſt needs fall. Near to this they ſhew us a little Path-way very narrow, upon the Brink of a vaſt Precipice, which was the way by which S. *Francis* went to pray under that Rock. The Devil envying his great Devotion, attempted upon a time to caſt him down headlong; but he ſeeing the Enemy of Mankind coming towards him, leand himſelf againſt the Rock, which made way for his Body, ſoftning like Wax to receive him. They ſtill ſhew this Impreſſion of his Body left in the Rock, but which may as well have been done with a Chizzel, as the way they tell us. As for the Devil, ſure it is that the *Roman Catholicks* make many pretty Stories of him, that are not always very Authentick. I remember to have ſeen in *France*, in the Church of S. *Columb* near *Sens*, a very pleaſant Hiſtory, repreſented *En relief*, upon an Holy-Water Baſin of Marble, near the Door of the Church, concerning an holy Hermit called *Beat*. The Devil being come on a certain time to diſtract his Thoughts, whilſt he was ſaying of his Office, the Saint laying hold of him, lift him up by the Ears, and put him into the Baſin, and having laid his Breviary upon it, kept him a Priſoner there for ten days together. Nothing can be imagined more Comical, than to ſee the Repreſentation of this Devil, who as far as he is able, lifts up his great Aſſes-ears above the Holy-water, with the marks of an extream Rage in his Countenance; for, ſay they, he fears the Holy-

water, many degrees beyond the Fire of Hell. The Monks of this Abby thought good to be at the charge of this work, *ad perpetuam rei memoriam*; But I return to Mount *Alvern*. The Fathers afterwards ſhewed us many other places in the Rocks where S. *Francis* performed his Religious Exerciſes, and amongſt others, that where he wrote the Conſtitutions of his Order, whereof I have ſeen the Original writ with his own Hand, at our Lady of *Portiuncule*, which is a little Chappel in *Umbria*, about five miles from *Aſſiſe*. Here it was, as they tell us, that he had many Revelations and Apparitions: Amongſt the reſt, they tell us of an Apparition of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who in conſideration of the great Zeal of this Saint for the Salvation of Sinners, granted to him as plenary an Indulgence as he could give, that is to ſay, an entire Remiſſion of Guilt and Puniſhment for all thoſe, who the firſt day of *Auguſt* ſhould viſit this little Chappel: So that the grand Univerſal Jubile of the Holy Year, is not more ſaving to Sinners than this of S. *Francis*. Any perſon who on this day goes to viſit that Chappel, with intention to enjoy the advantage of this Jubile, with ſaying five *Pater Noſters* and as many *Ave Maries*, be he the moſt abominable ſinner that lives on earth, becomes as pure and innocent as he was when newly-Baptized; and ſhould he die in that condition, there is neither Hell nor Purgatory for him, but would go directly to Paradiſe. And conformable to this Belief of the *Roman Catholicks*, and more particularly of the *Italians*, there is ſuch a prodigious concourſe

courſe of People on this day from all parts, that it cauſes a Famin in all the Country thereabouts, and many are killed in the throng that is at the Door of the Church, who then go to enjoy the priviledge of their Indulgence in the other World. Now ſeeing all this, muſt not we avow, that either the *Roman Catholicks* are very blind, or elſe very negligent of their Salvation, when in the moſt important Affair imaginable, and the greateſt concern of their immortal Souls, the Remiſſions of their Sins, rely upon the word of a mortal man? Their S. *Francis* has told them, that by going to ſuch a place, on ſuch a day, and there ſaying ſuch and ſuch Prayers, their Sins, with all the Chaſtiſements due to them for the ſame, ſhall be entirely forgiven them, and that he has received the aſſurance of this from the mouth of Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, who, he ſaith, appear'd in particular to him for this purpoſe; and without examining the matter any further, they believe it, they rely upon his word, and caſt behind their backs, *O ſtupendous occæcation!* the ſacred Oracles of the Goſpel, which do ſeriouſly warn them, that the only way to have their Sins pardoned, is true Repentance. The Fathers *Soccolanti* of the Order of S. *Francis*, who are extreamly enriched by means of this Devotion, have built themſelves in this place a very fair Convent; and foraſmuch as the Chappel was too little for their uſe, they have built a great and magnificent Church round about it, ſo as the little Church ſtands now encloſed in the greater. I never yet ſaw any place of Devotion in *Italy*, which had not ſome fair

fair Palace, and a good Kitchin for the uſe and Accommodation of thoſe who make the beſt of it, which I confeſs makes them ſtill the more ſuſpect to me. Five miles diſtant from hence we met with *Aſſiſe*, which is a pretty Town, ſituate on a Hill: This is the place where S. *Francis* was born, and where they ſay his Body repoſeth at the great Convent of the *Franciſcans*, in a Subterranean Chappel, under the High Altar. 'Tis ſaid that his Body and that of S. *Dominick* continue there, without the leaſt ſymptom of Corruption, and that they ſtand both upright on their Feet, Hand in Hand, without any thing to uphold them: and that it hath pleaſed God thus to permit, that theſe two Saints, that had been ſo great Friends during their Lives, ſhould not be ſeparated after Death. This is a Myſtery that is not ſuffered to be ſeen at preſent; the Pope himſelf, for all his pretended Power in Heaven and on Earth, is not admitted to this Priviledge, ſince one of his Predeceſſors miſcarried in the Attempt, who being reſolv'd to take a view of this rare wonder, died ſuddenly. And ſoon after both theſe Sainſt appeared to an honeſt *Franciſcan* Fryar, and told him, that the like ſhould happen to all thoſe who ſhould be ſo Fool-hardy to attempt the ſame thing. But yet notwithſtanding all this Tradition, the Fathers *Soccolanti*, who conſtitute a diſtinct Body from that of the *Franciſcans*, aſſure us, That they have the Body of S. *Francis* at *Portiuncule*, which, as I have already ſaid, is not above five miles diſtant from thence; as well as the *Dominicans* maintain that they have the Body of

of their Patriarch in their great Convent of *Bononia*. Indeed, the Reaſon why the Popes do not viſit this place, is not becauſe they are afraid of meeting Death there, but becauſe they are afraid of diſobliging of one of theſe potent Parties, I mean the *Franciſcans*, or the *Dominicans*; ſince it is evident, they could not make the Diſcovery, without ruining one or other of theſe Devotions, which would be a vaſt prejudice to theſe Religious Orders; wherefore they like better to leave the People in Superſtition and Error, than to open their Eyes at their own Coſt. The Pope is oblig'd to cultivate and improve the Intereſt of the *Monks*, foraſmuch as they ſupport his Intereſt.

The third Thing wherewith I deſign'd to entertain you, before my cloſing of this LETTER concerning S. *Francis*, is, That amongſt other things, I ſaw a ſmall Convent which he built himſelf, with the Aſſiſtance of his Brethren, in a Deſcent from the *Apennin*, leading to a Town of *Italy*, called, *The Borough of the Holy Sepulchre*. He lived in this Convent ſeveral Years, and deſign'd it for a Model to thoſe Convents of his Order, that ſhould be built for time to come. To ſpeak the truth, I never in my Life ſaw ſo wretched a dwelling. The whole Convent is nothing elſe but a company of Holes or Caves, more proper to lodge Bears, than for Men to retire in. Now, I could wiſh, that men would a little compare this poor Hovel, with thoſe magnificent Convents which his Children, I mean thoſe who profeſs to live under his Rule, have built throughout

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all *Italy*; to wit, thoſe grand Convents of *Rome*, *Naples*, *Venice*, and in a word, of all the other Cities. Have not the moſt famous Architects exhauſted their Art, and rack'd their Brains, to form the model of them? The moſt renowned Painters employ'd their utmoſt Skill and choiceſt Colours to make all their Walls a pleaſing and lively Story? The moſt curious Gilders their fineſt Gold, to make thereof Ceilings bright and luminous? And laſtly, have not the Bowels of the *Apennin* been ravag'd for the fineſt Marbles, the choiceſt *Jaſpers* and rareſt *Porphyries*, to form the Pillars that ſupport them, to pave their Cloiſters, their Refectories, and their Dormitories; and to compoſe all the Doors, Windows, and Chimneys of their Cells? The *Capuchin* Fathers are the only men that have witneſſed ſome horror for ſo extravagant a Pomp, ſo diametrically oppoſite to the Laws of Humility and Poverty, which they received from their Legiſlator S. *Francis*. They engag'd themſelves at the beginning of their Reformation, to a certain Standard of Building their Convents, which was both very modeſt and regular; only they have always had a great care to provide themſelves fair Gardens, with fine Parterres, pleaſant Fountains, and great Walks of Trees, which are commonly Frequented by the Gentlemen of Cities that are near them, to take the Air in. The *Capuchins* are at this day the beſt Gardiners in *Europe*. In *Italy* they furniſh all the Ladies with Flowers, and Big-bellied Women with Fruits.

But we find, that of late they have loſt much of their modeſty in building too: The new Buildings they make at preſent are more lofty, more large, their Cells greater, their Churches more adorned, and their other Regular places more comporting with the Modern way of Building. They have very fair Convents at *Venice*, *Florence*, *Piſa*, and *Milan*. When I paſſed through the Dutchy of *Burgundy* in *France*, I ſaw at *Dijon* the fine Pile of Building theſe Fathers caus'd to be rais'd for their ſick, which was not in the leaſt inferiour to the fair Palaces of the Preſidents and Counſellors of Parliament of that City. And when I paſs'd through *Germany*, in my way for *England*, I ſaw upon the *Rhine*, about half a days Journy above *Coblentz*, a ſtately Building, which I took for one of the Palaces of the Elector of *Treves*, but was indeed a Convent of *Capuchins*, which his Electoral Highneſs cauſed to be built for them. Before the Foundations of it were laid, he demanded of them a Model of their Convents, to have it built by; but the Fathers anſwered him, That if S. *Francis* were to give the Plane, it would be very plain and ſcanty; but that foraſmuch as his Electoral Highneſs had the Goodneſs to concern himſelf therewith, it could not well be blam'd, if the Building did in ſome degree ſuit with his Greatneſs.

The Concluſion of all is this, Sir, That whatever theſe men may pretend to, as long as they ſhall make the Chriſtian Perfection to conſiſt in certain Phantaſtick, Stoical, and extraordinary ways of Living,

Living, a ſhort times Experience will make it appear they have deceiv'd themſelves; all their fine Deſigns will vaniſh in their own view. And as the Principles on which they build are falſe, they will alway find themſelves reduc'd to the impoſſibility of practiſing what they have vowed; and will be forc'd at laſt to acknowledge, that the great Axioms of Chriſtian Morality, which are of an infallible truth, and to which only we ought to tye our ſelves; are *to avoid Evil, and to do Good; to love God with all our Heart, and our Neighbour as our ſelves.* I concludé with theſe excellent words, and am with all my Heart,

Sir,

Your, &c.

The

The Fourth LETTER,

Of a Journy to Loretto, &c.

SIR,

HAving promis'd in my laſt LETTER to give you an Account of my Journy to *Loretto*, I doubt not but your Curioſity (to be informed about that place of Devotion, which makes ſo great a Noiſe in the World) will incline you to wiſh for the performance of my promiſe. To the end therefore that I may acquit my ſelf thereof, I ſhall begin where my laſt LETTER left me. After the view I had taken of Mount *Alverne*, I parted with my Company, who went no further, and all alone came down the other ſide of the *Apennin*; and taking my way through the Towns of *Foſſombrône* and *Urbane*, I came to *Fane*, which is a pretty City, ſituate on the *Adriatick Sea*. Whilſt I was here, going abroad in the morning to look out for ſome Convenience to go to *Loretto*, I ſaw a great company of perſons very comically mounted, and dreſs'd, coming into Town. They were Pilgrims that came from *Bononia*, being about Threeſcore in number, and all of them mounted on

on *Aſſes*, which is a very eaſie and commodious way of Travelling, and more in requeſt in the Marquiſate of *Ancone*, than the uſe of *Horſes*. The firſt place where we meet with this convenience of Travelling, is at *Imola*, half a days Journy from *Bononia*. Formerly Travellers were wont to hire their *Aſſes* at *Bononia*; but foraſmuch as ſome Wits took occaſion from hence to uſe an Alluſion, which did not over-pleaſe the Scholars and Doctors of the Univerſity of that City; (for it was a common ſaying, *We will go to* Loretto, *and take an Aß at* Bononia) the Magiſtrates for their ſakes aboliſh'd that Cuſtom; ſo that now theſe Beaſts muſt be hired at *Imola*, and for the value of about a ſhilling a man may travel ſix miles, which is the Stage thoſe *Aſſes* are wont to perform. They are furniſh'd with little Saddles and Stirrups, in the manner as Horſes; but there is no need either of a Whip or Spurs, for as ſoon as one is got upon their Backs, they run continually with all their might, until they be come to their Journies end; where being arrived, it is impoſſible by all the Stroaks that can be given them, to make them advance one ſtep further; but one is forc'd to leave them there, and take others. Thus theſe Aſſes are changed at every ſix miles end, till one comes to the Mountain of *Ancona*, which is not very far from *Loretto*.

But to return to our *Pilgrims*, and to give you a further deſcription of them; they were all of them accoutred in their Pilgrimage Habits, which conſiſted of a large Linnen Veſt, of an Aſh-grey colour,

colour, reaching to the middle of the Leg, with very wide Sleeves, coming down to the Wriſt; on the backſide of theſe Veſts, at the Collar, they have a kind of a large Cowl, which they put over their Heads, and being pull'd down reacheth to the Pit of the Stomach; ſo that their Faces are wholly covered with them. And to the end, that in this poſture they might have their free Sight and Breathing, theſe Cowls have openings in them, anſwering to the Eyes and Mouth, like Masks. They never draw theſe Cowls over their Heads, but when they come to places where they have no mind to be known; for otherwiſe, they let them hang backwards upon their Shoulders. They gird this Veſt about them with a Girdle, and ſomewhat above the Girdle upon their Breaſt, they have a Scutcheon, repreſenting the Arms of their Society, Confriery, or Company, which they call in Italian, *Scuola*. There be ſcarcely any *Italians* that are not of one or other of theſe Societies. Theſe *Pilgrims* moreover have a large Row of *Pater-noſter-Beads* hanging at their Girdles, and a *Pilgrims-Staff* in their Hands, which is the chief mark of their Pilgrimaging. Theſe Staves are about an half-Pikes length, with Knots or Protuberances at the Top and middle of them. They carry them to the Church, to get them bleſt by their Curates, before their Setting-forth, which Ceremony is performed with many Prayers, and the aſſiſtance of Holy-Water: As ſoon as they have received them, it is not lawful for them to ſtay any longer than Three days at the place of their Reſi-

dence, and cannot be admitted to the Communion till they have performed their Pilgrimage, except they be pleaſed to change the Vow they have made into a Pecuniary Mulct; for in that caſe they are very readily diſcharged by the Prieſts. The *Pilgrims* which I ſaw, upon their arrival at *Fane*, were all of them dreſt in Veſts of the ſame Colour, and had already run one Stage on their *Aſſes*. Their Veſts were all New, and of very fine Linnen; and foraſmuch as in all appearance, they were not mov'd to put on that Garb from a Penitent Spirit, they had taken care to tuck them up high enough in ſeveral places, to make their fine Cloaths of Gold and Silk, they had under them, to be ſeen; which made me alſo believe, that probably they muſt be Perſons of Quality. Their Girdles were of Silk, of the ſame colour with their Veſts, and extreamly well wrought. Upon my Enquiry, Who they were? it was told me, They were the Company or Society of our *Lady of Life* of *Bononia*, which is the Name of a very richly Endow'd Hoſpital, for the Relief of poor Sick-People, and where the Prieſts have Erected a Congregation or Society of Noble Perſons, who have their daily Maſſes and Prayers there. Upon their entring into this Society, they oblige themſelves to aſſiſt the Poor of that place, with their Eſtates and beſt Endeavours. The greateſt part of the Gentlemen of *Bononia* are of this Society; they go every year by way of Proceſſion to *Loretto*, towards the end of Autumn, when Vintage is paſt; which is likewiſe obſerv'd by moſt other Compa-

nies.

nies. As ſoon as they were come near to the Great Church, the Prieſts came out to meet them, with the *Croſs* and *Banner*, by way of Reception and bidding of them welcom, and made a ſhort Speech to them; to which the Prior of the Company, being a *Bononian* Earl, return'd an Anſwer in few words. After this, they entred into the Church, where they made ſome ſhort Prayers, and then diſpers'd themſelves throughout the beſt Inns of the City, whither Orders had been ſent over-Night, to provide a good Dinner. It was about Ten of the Clock in the Morning when theſe *Pilgrims* arrived, and near half an Hour after, they were follow'd by about ſome Twenty *Caleches*, full of Ladies. Theſe were *She-Pilgrims*, who had left *Bononia* upon the ſame deſign; and who were all of them, either Kinſwomen or Miſtreſſes of the foreſaid *Pilgrim-Gentlemen*. They were all of them moſt ſumptuouſly Attired, and with an Air of Wantonneſs and Gaiety, that very ill became perſons who went a Pilgrimaging out of Devotion. They had Little *Pilgrims-Staves*, faſtned to the Bodies of their Gowns; ſome of them were of *Gold*, others of *Ivory* all beſet with coſtly *Pearls* and *Diamonds*; ſome had them made up of Orange-flowers, or of thoſe Artificial-flowers which are in ſo great eſteem at *Bononia*, and which make the greateſt part of the Traffick of the Nuns of that City. Others again had them all wrought of Needle-work, to that height of Curioſity, that one of them might probably have been the Work of many Years; And laſtly, Others had them of other

precious and coſtly Matter. The *Pilgrims* had no ſooner taken poſſeſſion of their Inns, and given Order to have all things in a readineſs, but they went forth to meet their Ladies; and having bid them welcom, they conducted them with a great deal of Honour and Ceremony into the Apartment prepared for them. My Curioſity to obſerve theſe Proceedings, prompted me to Return to mine Inn; where I had already taken notice of the great Preparations that were making for them: And finding that the Gentlemen wanted a Chamber more to accommodate them, I offered them mine; and in Recompence thereof they very civilly entreated me to Dine with them. The Table was cover'd with many Diſhes, and all Dinner-time their Diſcourſe was nothing but a continual Raillery upon their Ladies *Pilgrim-Staves*: It was not any hitting or pinching Raillery, but ſuch as conſiſted only of ſome pat Alluſions, full of Wit, and certain ambiguous Words, which theſe *Italians* knew to be for the Tooth of their Ladies. As ſoon as Dinner was done, every one of them put themſelves in order to proſecute their Journy. The *Pilgrims* mounted on their *Aſſes*, and the Ladies into their *Caleches*. As for my part, I joyn'd my ſelf with a very honeſt Man, born at *Parma*, who did not go on Pilgrimage, but Travell'd out of Curioſity. We follow'd this Troop of *Pilgrims* at a ſmall diſtance, being Mounted in the ſame manner as they, tho' we could not joyn our ſelves in company with them, becauſe we had no *Pilgrims* Habits. I demanded of the *Italian*, Why thoſe Gentle-

Gentlemen, who were all persons of Quality, and who probably had their Coach and Horses at *Bononia*, did make use of these Asses in their Journy. He told me, That some made use of them out of a Frolick, and to make themselves Mirth on the Road; others, by way of Humility, and to obtain more Merit: And moreover, that these *Asses* by carrying so many Devout persons to *Loretto*, had by that means obtain'd a very particular kind of Blessing; which was, That never any Mischance hapned to those that rid on them; for if by chance any did fall from them, or were cast by them into any Slough, they always escap'd very happily, without receiving any hurt. By this Discourse I began to perceive, that this honest Gentleman believed these *Asses* also to be Miraculous. He told me, That some *Algier*-Pirates having lately made a descent in the Marquisate of *Ancona*, could not with all their Endeavours overtake a Company of Travellers, that were Mounted on these Holy *Asses*, tho' they pursued them very close, and that having Fired very thick at them, they neither kill'd nor wounded any one of the Company. As we Rid on thus Discoursing together, we ever anon cast an Eye towards our *Pilgrims* that were before us, and found, they made it their only business on the Road, to divert the Ladies that Rid in the *Calaches*: Some of them Crossing the Way before them, strove to put themselves into Comical and Ridiculous postures, to make them Laugh; others fell from their *Asses* on purpose; and in a word, as the *Italians* have a very pleasant and ready Wit,

their Behaviour all along the Road was nothing but Mirth and Comedies. The Ladies without doubt, were not wanting to beſtow a Thouſand Bleſſings on the Day and Moment, wherein they were ſo happy to make a Vow to go to *Loretto*, foraſmuch as probably they had never in all their Lives been better diverted. Every Body knows the Humour of the *Italians*, That no ſooner have they Married a Wife, but they make her a Slave. However, their Jealouſie hath never yet been able to hinder them from going to the Church on, Sundays and Holy-days, or to the places of Pilgrimage, when they have made a Vow to that purpoſe. The Church of *Rome* have declar'd it a Mortal Sin, not to go to Maſs on thoſe days, or not to accompliſh the Pilgrimage one has Vowed, and hath depriv'd Husbands of the power to hinder their Wives from performing theſe neceſſary Duties. If any Husband ſhould go about to oppoſe his Wife in theſe particulars, the *Inquiſition* would take notice of it, and proceed againſt him, as againſt a perſon who does not approve of going to Maſs or Pilgrimages, and conſequently is an Heretick. The Ladies, you may aſſure you, are not wanting to make good uſe of this their Priviledge; or to have recourſe, whenever they think fit, to this laſt Plank of their Shipwreck-Liberty; *Ultima Naufragæ Libertatis Tabula.* Scarcely ever ſhall you ſee a Lady going to theſe kind of Devotions, but ſhe has ſome very Devout Lover following her; and one might judge with half an Eye, from the Air of theſe He and She

Pilgrims,

Pilgrims, I am now upon, what was the principal Motive that ſwayed them to undertake the Journy. About Four of the Clock in the Afternoon they ſtopt at a Village to refreſh themſelves; which done, the Gentlemen Rid on before to the next Town, to Complement the next Church before the Ladies coming, as they had done in the Morning at *Fane*. After which, they retir'd with their Ladies to the beſt Inns of the Town, where they were not wanting to make good Cheer, and divert themſelves; and in the foreſaid manner continued the reſt of their Journy, till they came to *Loretto*. I'll be judg'd by you, Sir, whether this be not a very Devout-way of Pilgrimaging, ſufficient to confound and abaſh the *Proteſtants*, who reject them, and content themſelves to call upon their Father that is in Heaven, without putting themſelves to the trouble of going to ſeek him either at *Rome* or *Loretto*.

We met with, beſides theſe *Pilgrims* already mentioned, whom we followed very cloſe, ſeveral other Bands of them, conſiſting of Merchants and Tradeſmen, ſome of them going to *Loretto*, and others returning thence, all of them making themſelves Sport with their *Pilgrim-Staves*, and extravagant Habits upon the Road; and in all the Inns they came to, treating themſelves with the beſt that could be had. I have ſince underſtood, that all Tradeſmen in *Italy* do each of them keep a Saving-Box, into which they put what Mony they can ſpare during the whole Year, in order to their going in Pilgrimage, either to *Loretto*, or to

S. *Anthony* of *Padua*, or to ſome other place, at a further or nearer diſtance, according as they gueſs that the Mony they have gathered will hold out, to defray their Charges going and coming, and every where making much of themſelves. And, to ſpeak the Truth, there is nothing more agreeable in *Italy*, than theſe kind of Journies in the beginning of the Spring, or towards the end of Autumn, after the great Heat is paſt; eſpecially when one is in good Company, where there is never wanting ſome or other, that hath the Gift of making others Laugh. The *Italian* Females eſpecially, make uſe of a Thouſand Intrigues and Inventions, to oblige their Parents or their Huſbands, to let them go a Pilgrimaging: There is no Vow they make more readily. Above all things, they make great uſe of the Authority of their Confeſſors, to acquaint them, That it is the Will of God that they ſhould go thither, according to their Vow. In the mean time, the whole Journy is ſpent in Fooleries, as I have now hinted; and the merry Adventures they meet with in them, furniſh them all the Winter at the Fires-Side, with pleaſant Stories to divert the Company.

Thus I have given you ſome account of the *Italian* He and She *Pilgrims*, according to my Promiſe, which I joyn'd with thoſe that frequent the Hoſpitals, whoſe Deſcription you have ſeen in my laſt LETTER, comprehends the whole Set of *Pilgrims*, from the Richeſt to the Pooreſt. 'Tis to no purpoſe here for the *Papiſts* to tell us, That theſe are only particular Inſtances, which

cannot

cannot be of any force againſt the Foundation of their Doctrin; for this Holineſs of Pilgrimages in general, is no more to be met with, than an Univerſal *à parte rei*. A man indeed may imagine to himſelf an Univerſal human Nature, yet will he never be able to find Human Nature, but in Particulars, or Individuals. Beſides, if *Pilgrimages* were endued with efficacy, to make men Holy, without doubt we ſhould find many *Pilgrims* ſo qualified; and the acknowledg'd Truth of the Old Proverb would be overthrown, which ſaith; *That never did a good Horſe, or Wicked Man, become better by going to* Rome. If S. *Jerom*, S. *Paula*, and many others, went to Viſit the Holy places of *Paleſtine*, yet it was not this that Sanctified them, or made them Saints; and without doubt, they might have done as well to have ſtaid at home. I ſpeak not this, as if I had a mind to blame them for ſo doing, no more than I would reprove an honeſt Man, who out of Curioſity, (yet ſo as not to neglect his Buſineſs, and without injuring any one) ſhould take a Journy to *Conſtantinople*, or to *Rome*. It is even Natural for Men to have ſome reſpect and veneration for Great Travellers; and I cannot but own it, to be a worthy Curioſity to go to *Jeruſalem*, and ſee all the Holy places where Jeſus Chriſt has wrought our Redemption; but with Reference to our Eternal Salvation, I look upon it as a very unprofitable thing, and I ſhall never believe that any one is the greater Saint for having been there: Jeſus Chriſt has not fix'd our Salvation to any particular places of the World;

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more than to others; and will never ſuffer, that thoſe Novel Additions men have been ſo bold as to joyn to the Goſpel, to accompliſh their Corrupt Ends, ſhould ſerve as efficacious Means for their Sanctification. I have converſed with a vaſt number of perſons that have gone a *Pilgrimaging*, but never could diſcern any the leaſt Amendment in their Lives; but on the contrary, I have ſeen many who have ſeem'd to me, to be much worſe than they were before. They counſell'd me in *Italy*, to do as a certain *Genoueſe* did, who was wont frequently to ask his Butcher, When he would go to *Loretto*? The Butcher wondring at this his oft repeated Queſtion, demanded of him one Day, What might be the Reaſon, why he ſo often asked him the ſame Queſtion; *Becauſe* (ſaid the *Genoueſe*) *I have of a long time obſerv'd, that upon your Return from your Pilgrimage, you never give me my full Weight; and for this Reaſon, I am reſolv'd, at your next Return, not to make uſe of you for five or ſix Months.* And indeed, he had Reaſon to make uſe of this Caution; for commonly in theſe Journies they ſpend at a moſt Extravagant rate, and afterwards, to reimburſe themſelves, they make no ſcruple, to make uſe of Thieviſh and Indirect Means. Moreover, as I have already intimated in my Third LETTER, there be very few that undertake theſe kind of Journies from a true Spirit of Devotion; but either out of Curioſity, or for their own Recreation; or other ſuch like Reaſons.

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But, forasmuch as I do not pretend to judge of the inward Intention of any one by any thing that is outward, I will at present be so favourable as to suppose, That all these *Pilgrims* go to their several places with the highest Sentiments of Devotion; but yet for all this, I say, they are not excusable before God, notwithstanding their good Intention, tho' we may pity them for being so fouly mistaken, as to give the Worship which is due to God alone, to a Creature. *O quam bonâ voluntate miseri sunt!* This is all the Favour we can do them: For we can by no means justifie those Adorations they render to the *Blessed Virgin* and *Saints*; yea, to the Houses where they have Liv'd, and the Instruments of their Martyrdom. But forasmuch as this point relates to Divinity, and my design is not to write to you as a Divine, but only as a Traveller, I shall leave it at present, and continue my Discourse about my Journy to *Loretto*. I arrived there towards the end of *October*. This Town is situate in the midst of a very fertile and pleasant Plain, two or three Miles from the *Adriatick* Sea. In former Times there were no Buildings here, besides the Chappel; but in process of Time they built many Houses about it; and the Popes, to whom all this Country belongs, have order'd a Wall with Bastions to be built round it: So that at present it is a considerable Fortress to secure the Ecclesiastical State on that side, and more particularly against the Landing of *Turks* and other Corsairs, who formerly did use very frequently to come and Ravage that part

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of the Country. This Chappel is by the *Italians* called, *LA SANTA CASA*, that is to ſay, *The Holy Houſe*. The Roman Catholicks believe this to be the very ſame Houſe, wherein Jeſus Chriſt dwelt at *Nazareth* with the Bleſſed Virgin his Mother, and his reputed Father S. *Joſeph*, for the ſpace of Thirty years, until the time that he began to Preach his Holy Doctrin, and to confirm it by his Divine Vertue and Miracles. They pretend it was Tranſported by Angels from *Nazareth*, where it ſtood at firſt, to the place where it is at preſent. The Hiſtory they give us of it runs thus; The *Saracenes* having made themſelves Maſters of *Paleſtina*, and the Holy places, the Bleſſed Virgin unwilling to leave ſo great a Treaſure, (as was the Houſe wherein ſhe had dwelt with her Son Jeſus Chriſt upon the Earth,) in the Hands of Infidels, Commanded the Angels to Tranſport it into the Chriſtian Territories: The Angels in Obedience to her Command took it up, Foundations and all, and carried it by Night into *Dalmatia*; but afterwards taking notice of their miſtake, and perceiving that the people there, were nothing nigh ſo good as the *Italians*, they took it up again, and another Night, carried it near to the City *Recanati* in *Italy*, placing it in a Field, that belonged to two Brothers; where it continued many years, until the Brothers began to quarrel about dividing the Alms that were given there; wherefore the Virgin to puniſh them Commands the Angels to take it up a third time, and to carry it to the Field of a poor Widow-Woman called *Loretto*, who was a very devout

vout Worſhipper of her. This good Woman riſing in the Morning, and finding a little Houſe, where there was not the leaſt ſign of any the Night before, was as much ſurprized as the Brothers were, to ſee it fled from their Field. In this ſurprize, She writes to the Pope what had hapned, who already was by Revelation made acquainted with the whole Matter, and immediately beſtowed vaſt Indulgences upon all thoſe who ſhould go to pay their bounden Duty to that Holy Houſe. The ſucceeding Popes have ſince confirmed all this, and have granted an infinite number of other Pardons: This place in proceſs of time, by great good luck for them, is become an inexhauſtible Fountain of Riches, and ſtill to this day brings them in Prodigious Sums of Mony every year. What think you, Is not this a very pleaſant Story, and is not the bare Relation ſufficient to render it contemptible? The good Angels that carried this Holy Houſe the firſt time into *Dalmatia*, ſure were very ſtupid, and did not mind what they did. Moreover if the Bleſſed Virgin was pleaſed to take it away from the two Brothers of *Becanati*, becauſe they were at variance about it; I wonder how ſhe has the Patience to leave it at preſent, amongſt a company of Raſcals and Robbers, that have Neſted themſelves there, and who for the moſt part of them are all Sellers of *Paternoſter*-Beads and Medals; for all that ever were at *Loretto* know, and are warned before they enter the Town, that in caſe they deſire to perform their Devotions there without having their Purſes pickt, they muſt hold their Beads in one Hand, and their

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Purſe in the other. I proceed now to the Deſcription of this Chappel, or the *Santa Caſa*. The whole Building is of Brick, about Twenty five Foot long, the length being not proportionable to the breadth of it: The Wood with which it was Cieled, being Conſum'd and Rotten by Age, it has ſince been Vaulted with Brick. It hath two Windows, and two Doors on the two ſides of it, and another Window beneath, by which they ſay the Angel *Gabriel* entred, to Annunciate to the Bleſſed Virgin the Myſtery of the Incarnation. They have erected an Altar, in the very place where they ſay the Virgin was upon her Knees, when the Angel entred; and upon the Altar is an Image of the Virgin, of Wood, about Four Foot and an half high, which is the Miraculous Statue on which they beſtow their Adorations. She has Changes of Cloaths for all Worky-days, and for all Holy-days and Sundays; ſhe has them of all ſorts of Colours, and Mourning Cloaths, for the Paſſion week. They ſhift or change her Cloaths with abundance of Ceremonies. I was there one Saturday in the Evening, when the Prieſts undreſſed her; they took away from her the Suit of Purple ſhe had on, in order to dreſs her in a Green Gown, which they performed in the following manner; They firſt of all took off her Veil, then her great Robe or Mantle Royal; afterwards her Gown, and her Upper and Under Petticoats, and laſt of all, with a great deal of Reverence they pull'd off her Smock, to put her on a clean one. I leave to you, Sir, to gueſs what thoughts this may probably impreſs on the Imagination, as well of

thoſe who perform the Ceremony, as of thoſe who are the Aſſiſtants and Spectators. True it is that the Statue is not made Naked; the Workman it ſeems that wrought it, having been more modeſt than ſo, and repreſented her as Cloth'd: But this action of clothing and unclothing the Figure of a Woman, is a thing that offends the Minds of thoſe that are never ſo little Chaſte or Modeſt. I acknowledge indeed that they perform this Ceremony with a great deal of outward Reſpect, if it may not more properly be called Idolatry; for they kiſs every part of the Apparel they take off from her, bending their Knees to the Ground before the Statue, and Adoring it. The People that are preſent upon their Knees, all the time the Cremony is performing, beat their Breaſts, and nothing is heard throughout the Chappel, but Sighings and Groans, with interrupted Words and Ejaculations; *Holy Virgin of* Loretto *help me*! *Mother of God hear me*! and other ſuch like. As ſoon as the Image is quite Naked or Undreſt, theſe Sighs and Groans are doubled, but decreaſe again by degrees, as they dreſs it. I cannot imagin what ſhould be the cauſe of this change of their Tone, except it ſhould be this, that when the Statue is quite undreſt, it more ſtrongly affects their Imagination, and makes them believe they ſee the very Virgin in Perſon, and that this therefore is the nick of time, for them to Pray with the greateſt fervour of Devotion. They dreſſed her in a Green Suit of Apparel, extreamly rich, being a Flower-work upon a ground of Gold. The Veil they put upon her Head was yet more coſtly; for beſides that it was of

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the ſame Cloth of Gold, it was all Powder'd with great fine Pearls: After this they put upon her Head a Crown of Gold, thick beſet with precious Stones of an ineſtimable price: Next they put on her Neck-Jewel, her Pendants and her Bracelets of Diamonds, and many great Chains of Gold about her Neck, to which were faſtned abundance of Hearts and Medals of Gold, which are the Preſents that Queens and Cathdlick Princeſſes have beſtowed on the Image out of Devotion, in Teſtimony that they were reſolved to be its Slaves. The whole Adorning and Furniture of the Altar was equally Sumptuous and Magnificent, nothing being to be ſeen but great Pots or Veſſels, Baſins, Lamps and Candleſticks, all of Gold and Silver, and beſet with precious Stones; all which by the light of a vaſt quantity of Wax Candles that burn there Day and Night, afforded a luſtre whoſe Beauty Raviſh'd the Soul through the Eyes. It is no wonder to me that many do aver themſelves to be ſenſible of an extraordinary Devotion in this place: For beſides that one cannot enter there without thinking of God, becauſe one's Imagination is already foreſtall'd with the thought, That it is the Chamber where the Eternal Word became Incarnate; it is certain that it is the property of all Bright and Luſtrous Creatures, to raiſe our Hearts to the Creator, more than dark and common ones uſe to do; and eſpecially when their Splendor is ſeconded with Novelty. When we lift up our Eyes to the Firmament in a clear night when the Sky is full of Stars, this ſight powerfully raiſes our Souls to God, and makes us ſay, *Quam*

Auguſta

Auguſta eſt Domus Dei! How glorious is the Houſe of God! In like manner thoſe perſons, who are not wont to ſee ſo many Lights, ſo much Gold, Silver and precious Stones, which mutually exalt each others Glory, as ſoon as they enter this Chappel of *Loretto*, where they meet with all theſe things together, cannot but naturally be moved with thoughts of Devotion. Naturaliſts obſerve that precious Stones are for the moſt part extreamly friendly and ſympathiſing with the heart of man, and that they Recreate and make it light and merry by a ſecret ſympathy they have with the Vital Spirits; now there being an almoſt infinite number of all ſorts of theſe precious Stones in this Chappel, who can doubt but that they muſt make a correſponding great impreſſion on the hearts of the raviſht Spectators? This natural effect being by ſome ſimple and ignorant people ſuppoſed to be a particular Grace of God appropriated to that place, makes them take it for no leſs than a continual Miracle: but the Extravagancies continually committed here are a ſufficient Argument againſt this weak and ungrounded Opinion. They kiſs the Walls all round about the Chappel, they lick the Bricks with their Tongues, they rub their Beads againſt them, they take Thread, and having compaſſed the Chappel with it, as if they pretended to take the Meaſure or Compaſs of it, they afterwards make a Girdle of it, which they ſay is very efficacious againſt Witchcraft, and all manner of Ills. The Prieſts in the mean time are not unmindful of their Gain; they have perſons placed every where in the Chappel and great Church, who preſs

the people to give Alms, and to have Maſſes ſaid for them to our Lady. They pay a Crown apiece for every Maſs, and the Prieſts promiſe to ſay them all at our Ladies Altar, that is in the Chappel. 'Tis certain that the Prieſts receive mony for the ſaying of above 50000 Maſſes every year; and yet it is as ſure that it is impoſſible for them to ſay above 10000 in a year at that Altar; ſo that all the reſt who have given their mony for that purpoſe, muſt needs be fruſtrated of their intentions, and chouſed of their mony. Thoſe that are rich and wealthy beſtow great Preſents upon the wooden Statue of the Virgin that is in the Chappel, which without any addition or modification, they call *The Holy Virgin of* Loretto: They preſent her with Necklaces, and Bracelets of Pearls and Diamonds, Hearts of Gold, Medals, Candleſticks, Lamps Emboſt, Pictures of Gold and Silver of a prodigious weight and bigneſs. Many preſent her with Rings, and moſt precious Jewels, as a token of their eſpouſing of her. She hath above fifty Gowns, all of them of an ineſtimable price; inſomuch as ſhe is at this day the richeſt Puppit that is in the Univerſe, and the piece of Wood the moſt ſumptuouſly dreſt that is to be found in the whole World. 'Tis to this Image that thoſe famous Litanies, which are ſo much in vogue with the Church of *Rome*, have been addreſſed, which are commonly called *The Litanies of the Virgin*, or, *The Litanies of our Lady of* Loretto, wherein ſhe is termed *The Queen of Angels*; *Mother of Divine Grace*; *the Gate of Heaven*; *the help of Chriſtians*; *the Refuge of Sinners*,

ners, &c. However, neither all these costly Ornaments, or glorious Titles have been powerful enough to divert the Worms from exerting their Activity upon this so highly adorned and adored Statue; for I observed as they were a changing its Cloathes, that the Wood was all rotten and full of wormholes. Thus we see that this piece of Wood, which is supposed to hear the Prayers of so many Idolaters, carries its own Condemnation with it, in that it is not able to rescue it self from Corruption. The Popes, who draw more Gold and Silver from this place, than from any other in the World, have accordingly favoured it with the greatest stock of Indulgences. They have granted to this Chappel all the Priviledges appertaining to their S. *Peter* of *Rome*. The Grand Penitentiaries and Confessors, which are all Jesuits, do here absolve all sorts of Cases, even of those the Popes have reserved for themselves: For seeing it is a place in the Popes own Territories, 'tis very indifferent to them, whether they be absolved there or at *Rome*, because their profit is the same: But I question not, should the Angels think fit once more to take the pains to Transport this Chappel into the Estate of some strange Prince, they would soon revoke and cancel all their Pardons, forasmuch as then the case would be altered. They are very careful to preserve this Chappel whole and entire; to this end they have darted all the Thunderbolts of the *Vatican* against those who shall undertake to loosen the least Stone of it, or so much as to scrape the Walls; it is lawful to lick them,

but not to bite the leaſt particle off from them. The reaſon of this is, becauſe according to the Principles of *Rome*, a part is taken for the whole: Thus if they have but a finger, or ſome other ſmall part of a Saints Body, 'tis the ſame thing as if they had it all entire: Whence it follows, that if any one could get but a little piece of Brick of the *Santa Caſa*, he might go and build a Chappel in a ſtrange Country, and having encloſed the bit of Brick, make the place as conſiderable as this of *Loretto*, and by this means ſpare ſo many people the labour of going ſo far in Pilgrimage. By this you may conceive how great a damage this would be to the Popes, and how much it is their intereſt to affix, as they do in all places within and without the Chappel, and the great Church which compaſſeth it about, the *Anathema's* and Excommunications they have pronounced againſt thoſe, who ſhould be ſo unadviſed as to take away the leaſt particle thereof. However, being miſtruſtful of the Efficacy of their Thunderbolts in this caſe, and not believing them ſufficient to ſecure this their vaſt Treaſure; they have had recourſe to ſubtilty and cunning, and have falſly publiſhed that God hath puniſhed many perſons with ſudden Death, who had been ſo bold to take away ſome of the Bricks thereof; that others have been deprived of Motion, until they had vowed to reſtore what they had ſo ſacrilegiouſly ſtolen; and laſtly, that Angels had come and ſnatched the Bricks out of the hands of thoſe that had ſtolen them, in order to fix them where they were before. Amongſt

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the reſt they ſhew us two Bricks, which are faſtned to one of the Walls of the Chappel with two pieces of Iron, to diſtinguiſh them from the reſt; the one of which a *Poliſh* Gentleman had carried away with the deſign of having a like Chappel to that of *Loretto* built in his own Country. They tell us that by an inviſible force he was ſtopt in his Journy, and deprived of all motion, and by this means was forced to ſend back the Brick he robb'd, to *Loretto*, which he had no ſooner done, but his immobility being taken away, he was in a condition to continue his Journy. The other was taken by a Spaniſh Lord, with the ſame intent, who being on his Journy homeward the Angels purſu'd him, and after having bang'd him handſomly, took away the Brick from him, and carried it to *Loretto*.

Theſe Miracles (and many others of the ſame ſtamp, that is to ſay, every whit as ridiculous) are printed and affixed in ſeveral places of the Church, that Strangers may read them, and beware. For my part, Sir, I can aſſure you, that all theſe are no better than great ſtaring Lies, forged and invented by the Popes, whereby they craftily endeavour to perſuade their *Roman Catholicks*, That they have the *Santa Caſa* whole and entire, and that there is not the leaſt Scrap of it in any other part of the habitable World. That which makes me aſſert this with ſo much confidence, is, That I my ſelf, who write to you, did looſen a conſiderable piece of this Wall of *Loretto*, and carried it away with me, without being bang'd by the

Angels, or made immovable by ſome inviſible Power: And if the Guardians of the Chappel have not taken care to ſtop up the hole again, I am ſure it may be there ſeen ſtill to this day.

They begin to ſay their Maſſes every day at the *Virgins Altar* by Two of the Clock in the Morning, and I repair'd thither about Three, and finding but a very few perſons in the Chappel, I kept in the Entry, where I could not be taken notice of by any, the people being all before me, and none on either ſide of me, or behind me; at which time, with an Iron Inſtrument I had, I broke off a piece of the Wall, and carried it away with me; ſince which I have travell'd throughout all *Italy*; I have been in *France* and in *Germany* neither hath any the leaſt ill Accident befallen me; until at laſt, being weary of carrying this Stone ſo long in my Pocket, and looking upon it as an unprofitable Burthen, I caſt it away in the Fields by way of Contempt, and out of a kind of Indignation, in that it had received ſuch Adorations as are due to God alone. I muſt own, that about Two days Journy from *Loretto*, near *Tolentin*, in my way to *Rome*, there hapned to fall a very great Rain for two days together, whereby the Brooks ſwell'd to that degree, that they drown'd a great part of the Country; and paſſing over an old Bridge, one of the Arches ſhaken with the tread of my Horſe, fell down with an horrid Noiſe into the Water at two ſteps from me, upon which ſwiftly turning my Horſe, I got over the other half of the Bridge behind me as faſt as I could,

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and at the ſame moment the Brick I had taken at *Loretto* came to my mind: I deliberated with my ſelf, Whether I ought to go back and return it to the place again; but taking Reaſon rather than the preſent Accident to be my Counſellor, I made theſe following Reflections.

Firſt, I conſider'd, That if indeed God were ſo Jealous of preſerving that Chappel whole and entire in every part of it, he would never have ſuffer'd the Ceiling thereof, which was a conſiderable part thereof, to rot and fall down; to repair which Defect, (as I hinted before) they have Arch'd it over. In the ſecond place, I conſider'd with my ſelf, That the *Manger* at *Bethlehem*, and the *Holy Sepulchre*, were not inferiour in dignity to this Little Houſe of *Nazareth*, and that nevertheleſs God had been pleaſed to leave them in the Hands of Infidels; and that conſequently the ſtory told concerning the Tranſportation of the *Santa Caſa*, and the motives of it, could be no better than a Fable. And laſtly, as I my ſelf had been an Eye-witneſs of ſo many Cheats and Lies, which the *Romiſh Prieſts* invent to increaſe their Gains, this ſerv'd for a convincing Argument to me, Not to give the leaſt Credit to all theſe pretended Miracles, which are only invented either to preſerve the Chappel of *Loretto* in the Popes Territories; or at leaſt to diſpoſe the minds of the people, that in caſe upon occaſion of War, any ſtrange Prince ſhould cauſe the ſame to be carried to his own Country, they might notwithſtanding believe that the Angels had brought it back again

to its former place; and conſequently might boldly deny that this ſuppoſed Prince had the true *Santa Caſa*.

All this made me conclude there was nothing extraordinary in the fall of this Bridge, as hapning by reaſon of the age and weakneſs of the Bridge, or becauſe the violent Torrent of the Waters had undermin'd its Foundation. Being thus ſatisfied, I went to ſeek another place for to paſs the Water, and ſo continued my Voyage, thanks be to God, very happily. Had I gone back to reſtore the Stone, the *Prieſts* to be ſure would not have been wanting to cry out, *A miracle, a miracle!* and to publiſh the ſame every where, a Picture would preſently have been drawn of this Accident, which they would have added to the great number of that kind, which are faſtned to the Walls of the Church, and the piece of Brick would have been diſtinguiſh'd with a piece of Iron, to be taken notice of by Pilgrims and Strangers, as an evidence of the ſaid Miracle; whereas Experience and Time have ſince fully convinced me, That God never concern'd himſelf in the caſe, and that the fall of the Bridge was meerly caſual. Before I take my leave of *Loretto*, I will tell you in general, that the Treaſure preſerved there is altogether ineſtimable. A Pope being inform'd that ſome had acquainted the *Turks* thereof, and that they were projecting to make a Deſcent there, cauſed the Town to be fortified with ſtrong Walls and Baſtions, where he planted abundance of great Guns: He apprehended, it ſeems, that the *Angels* would not be ſo

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zealous to preſerve the Treaſure that is there kept, as they had been to ſecure the Bricks of the *Santa Caſa*. And to ſpeak the truth, the Caſe is very different; for it is an eaſie matter to reſtore the Bricks, where any are wanting, and then declare that the *Angels* have return'd them to their places; but ſhould the *Turks* come once to take away the precious Stones of that ineſtimable Treaſury, 'tis to be fear'd they would be to ſeek for a Miracle to reſtore them. The *Jeſuits*, who are very vigilant of getting into poſſeſſion of the beſt and moſt advantageous Poſts, have obtain'd all the Confeſſors places of this Church, and at certain Hours of the day they repair thither for to hear Confeſſions in all ſorts of Languages. They have a very peculiar and wonderful dexterouſneſs to ſqueez mony from Strangers; they beg ſome of all thoſe that come to Confeſs to them, on pretence of aſſiſting poor *Pilgrims* therewith: but indeed keep all they get for themſelves, except only ſome few Pence they give them now and then, making uſe to this purpoſe of their mental Reſtriction, as a *Jeſuit* (who had quitted their Society) told me: for ſeeing they have made a Vow of Perſonal Poverty, that is, of never poſſeſſing any thing in particular, but all in common; they pretend themſelves to be the firſt and chiefeſt Poor, and *Pilgrims* too, foraſmuch as every Man is a *Pilgrim* upon Earth. Thus they beſtow the Alms given them upon themſelves, and believe that by this means they abundantly anſwer the intention of thoſe who have truſted them with the Diſtribution of them.

them. A poor Prieſt of *Savoy*, who was reduc'd to a very pitiful Condition, coming to me to beg an Alms, I ſent him to the *Jeſuits*, who I knew had that morning received Threeſcore Crowns of a rich man, with whom I had ſpoke my ſelf. The *Jeſuit* told him, he was very ſorry he was not in a condition to aſſiſt him, for that of a long time he had not been entruſted with any Charities; and ſo ſent him away without giving him any thing. Which way ſoever a man turns himſelf in this Holy City of *Loretto*, he meets with perſons that beg mony of him. The Prieſts ask it, to ſay Maſſes for you; the *Jeſuiſts*, to give Alms to the Poor, as I have told you: An infinite number of Box-Carriers, that gather in mony for the uſe of the Chappel, are continually Dunning you, as well in the Streets as the Church, to put ſomething into them. The Shop-keepers of the Town, who are all of them Sellers of Bead-Rows and Medals, deaffen your Ears on every ſide, to come and buy their Trumperies. A vaſt number of Vagabonds, in the Habit of Pilgrims, flock about you to beg the *Paſſada*, and cut your Purſe if they can. And laſtly, the Vintners and Inn-keepers ſell their Proviſions at a moſt exorbitant price; alledging for their Excuſe, That the Pope lays ſuch vaſt Impoſts upon every thing that enters *Loretto*, that it is impoſſible any otherwiſe to ſave themſelves harmleſs; inſomuch as all being well weighed, the Pope proves to be the greateſt Exactor of all. And is not this now, think you, a place ſufficiently qualified with Holineſs, to make

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it the Darling City of the *Bleſſed Virgin*? And are not theſe well-choſen People, for whom God ſhould work ſo many Miracles to keep them in the ſecure poſſeſſion of this Houſe, which the Papiſts pretend to be the very ſame wherein the *Eternal Word* became Incarnate? All the Walls of the Great Church are full hung with a vaſt number of little Pictures, in which are repreſented the Miracles the *Holy Virgin* hath wrought in favour of thoſe who have vowed to go thither in *Pilgrimage*.

I ſhall take occaſion here to acquaint you in what manner Miracles are ſtill wrought every day in *Italy*, and what they are. I have obſerved three chief Cauſes of them; The firſt is, *The Covetouſneſs of the Clergy*; the ſecond is, *The Cunning of ſome Beggars*; and the third is, *Popular Error*, joyn'd with a Cuſtom the Prieſts have introduc'd of ſending *Pictures to the Churches*, repreſenting the Dangers that any have eſcaped.

As for the firſt of theſe, which is the *Avarice* of the *Prieſts* and *Religious*, which are the two Orders that divide the whole Clergy, there can be no better Invention to ſatisfie the ſame (next to *Purgatory*) than this of publiſhing from time to time ſome Miracles, they pretend to have been wrought in their Churches. I ſay, next to *Purgatory*, which indeed is to them an overflowing Source of Riches, becauſe the thing is more general. All Men muſt die, and all the Elect (according to their Doctrin) muſt at leaſt paſs through the Flames of *Purgatory*, for ſome Hours or ſome Days;

Days; Neither was there ever any (ſay they) except the *Bleſſed Virgin*, who by a peculiar Priviledge has been exempted from it. This is the Reaſon why there is not a *Roman Catholick* to be found who doth not give mony for Maſſes, and Prayers to be ſaid for his deceaſed Friends and Kindred; or, who doth not make Legacies or Foundations, for to have the ſame ſaid for himſelf, after his Death. But as for *Miracles*, theſe only happen in particular Caſes. Nevertheleſs, foraſmuch as the Life of Man is ſubject to many ſad Accidents or Diſaſters, Men would be very glad to be ſure of a Miracle to relieve them in time of need or danger. This is that which makes thoſe of the *Romiſh Communion*, to whom their *Prieſts* promiſe no leſs at every moment, upon Condition they will ſignalize their Devotion at the Chappel of ſuch a miraculous Saint, which they pretend to have in their Church, or joyn themſelves to ſome of their Confraternities, ſuffer themſelves eaſily to be perſuaded to give them what mony they ask of them. In the mean time, they find it neceſſary from time to time to awaken and excite the peoples Attentions by the ſtarting of ſome New Miracle, which they know how to do with a great deal of Addreſs and Cunning. The moſt common way they make uſe of is this; When they go to viſit the Sick, they carry along with them either Wine or Water, or ſome Rag of Linnen, which they have bleſt in the Name of ſuch an he or ſhe Saint: If the ſick perſon, who has made uſe of any of theſe, chance to Recover,

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which very naturally may happen ſo, becauſe we have Inſtances every day of perſons that recover, after that they have been given over by Phyſicians, then the Prieſts are ſure to attribute the Recovery of their Health to the Saint of their Church: They demand an Atteſtation of it from him who was ſick; they make a great Noiſe with it through the City; and the next Sunday they publickly proclaim the Miracle from the Pulpit. In like manner, if any perſon be ready to undertake a Journy or Voyage, they go to him, and perſuade him to make a Vow to ſome Saint of their Church; and if afterwards it happens that this perſon meet with ſome bad Accident; as a dangerous ſtorm at Sea, a fall from his Horſe, or the overturning of his Coach, and that he eſcapes with his Life and Health, as it often happens to the worſt of men; in this caſe he never fails aſcribing it to the he or ſhe Saint of ſuch a Church: Immediately upon his Return he acquaints the *Prieſts* or *Monks* therewith, who begin a new to toſs it about, crying, *A Miracle, a Miracle!* And that nothing can be of greater force againſts Storms and Tempeſts at Sea, or Miſchances by Land, than to apply ones ſelf to the Saint of their Church, and to procure Prayers and Maſſes to be ſaid for them there, as the perſon who is lately return'd from his Voyage, and to whom this Miracle has happned, did upon his Setting-out. Others, who are endowed with a larger Conſcience, and who believe it is lawful for them to lie, to enhance the Honour of their Saints, take the boldneſs to ſuppoſe and invent Miracles,

Miracles, and to produce themſelves for Examples; declaring, That they have had Revelations, or that the Saints themſelves have appeared to them, or have healed them of their Infirmities. The people, who ſuffer themſelves to be gull'd by the outward appearances of Godlineſs of thoſe ſorts of men, do not trouble themſelves to ſearch any further into the matter, but rely upon their word. There are ſome men, who from natural Intimations, know two or three days before what kind of Weather it will be. Thus there are ſome, who by the pains they feel in their *Corns*, will tell you whether we ſhall have fair or foul Weather. A certain Father of the Order of the *Servits* at *Vicenza*, a man of a wicked and debauch'd Life, who entertain'd three lewd Women at *Venice*, by whom he had had ſeveral Children, being ſeized with a Diſeaſe not fitting to be named, never fail'd of feeling exceſſive pains two or three days before Rain. Now there hapned an extraordinary Drought for three Months together, which cauſed extream Damage to all the Fruits of the Earth: but at laſt, the Seaſon being about to change, the Father was not wanting to have the ſad Advertiſements of it. He was the *Sacriſtan*, or (as we corruptly ſpeak it) *Sexton* of a Church called *Madonna del Monte*, or *My Lady of the Hill*, which is about half a League diſtant from the City of *Vicenza*, ſituate upon a pleaſant Hill, where is kept a miraculous Image of the *Virgin*. And foraſmuch as he perceived, That the Devotion of People was already much abated, which

which he was very ſenſible of by the ſlackneſs of his Purſe, he thought of kindling it again. To this purpoſe, making uſe of the preſent Conjuncture, he ſent to the *Podeſta*, or Governour of the City of *Vicenza*; acquainting him, That being at Prayer in the Night time before the Image of the Virgin, whoſe *Sacriſtan* he had the honour to be; ſhe had told him, with an intelligible Voice, and a pleaſant ſmile, *That ſhe had a great deal of Compaſſion on the Afflictions of her People, by reaſon of the great Drought which ſpoil'd all the Country; and that in caſe the Inhabitants of* Vicenza *would within three days make a general Proceſſion to his Church, ſhe would open the Floodgates of Heaven, ſo that there ſhould be Rain in abundance.* The Governour hereupon immediately cauſed an Order to be publiſhed for a Proceſſion againſt the time the good Fryar had ſignified; at which time the Weather did not fail to change and favour his wiſhes: For ſcarcely was the Proceſſion advanced half-way, but there fell ſo furious a ſhower, that all thoſe who aſſiſted at it, were almoſt overthrown, and had much ado to get to the Church, where they ſung Hymns of Thanks to the Virgin for that high favour. This Miracle being rumour'd abroad throughout the Country, for two Months together, drew a great number of people to this miraculous Image. The devout *Sacriſtan* finding his Purſe well lin'd, repair'd the next *Carnaval* to *Venice*, to divertize himſelf there, and to make his Miſtreſſes partakers of his good Fortune; and frankly acquainted them with the

Succeſs

Succeſs he had had, and how cleverly he had gull'd the unthinking people: But ſome time after, one of them falling out with him, like another *Delilah* betray'd him, and diſcover'd his Impoſture. Had it been in any other Country, he would hardly have eſcaped without bearing the Marks of it; but in *Italy* theſe things are eaſily excuſable, with ſaying, *That nothing was intended in all this, ſave only the Advancement of the Bleſſed Virgins Honour.*

Another fetch of the *Prieſts* is ſomething of my own Diſcovery, and which I do not know that ever any one before me has taken notice of; and it is this, They are us'd to entertain Children with an infinite number of falſe Tales and Stories, invented at random, concerning Apparitions and Miracles that never were. To explain this further to you, you may take notice, That in *Italy* the Children are Catechized every Sunday and Holy-day throughout the Year in all their Churches, at One of the Clock in the Afternoon. To make them the more ready and willing to come to be Catechized, the *Prieſts*, after that they have explain'd ſome one Point of Doctrin, they tell them for a Concluſion ſome pleaſant Story before they ſend them home. The little *Italians* liſten to it with the greateſt Attention imaginable, and as ſoon as they are come home, tell it to their Mothers. I have obſerv'd, That theſe *Prieſts* do commonly take for the Subject of their Story, ſome Miracle or other, which they pretend to have been wrought in their Church. I entred once into a Chappel, where

where one of these young Catechizers was informing his young Scholars; the Chappel was Dedicated to S. *Martin*. They ordinarily Paint this Saint on Horseback, and with his Sword cutting off the Half of his Cloak, to give it for an Alms to a poor Beggar. 'Twas in this posture his Statue, which was of a very pure White-Marble, represented him on the Altar of that Chappel. When the Catechizing was over, the Priest began to tell these Children a very pleasant Story concerning this Statue: He told them, *That a Good Curate of that Parish, had often seen him very fairly come down from the Altar, and Running a full Gallop out of the Church; that one day having taken the liberty to ask him, Whither he was a going? S.* Martin *told him, That he was hasting to the Assistance of a very honest Man, who had procur'd many Masses to be said at his Altar, and being at present fallen into the hands of Robbers, in the midst of a Wood, was in great danger of his Life; but that he hop'd to come timely enough for his Relief; and that at his Return, he would give him an Account of the Success of his Enterprize.* The Catechizer flourish'd his Discourse with Circumstances so extravagant and ridiculous, that it was impossible to forbear Laughing. For he gave a very particular description of S. *Martins* whole Journy, upon his Horse of *Marble*, how he Rid a full Gallop over Trees, Rivers, Cities, and all. The poor Children all this while Listned to him with profound silence and Attention. But the conclusion of all, and the Cream of the Jest was, *That*

every one that bore a great Devotion to that Chappel, and procur'd Maſſes to be ſaid there, in honour of S. Martin, *might aſſure themſelves never to periſh on the High-ways, by the hands of Robbers.* The next day I had occaſion to ſpeak to my young Clergy-man, and put him in mind of his *Marble* S. *Martin*, whom he had made to Ride Poſt, for a Diverſion to his Scholars. He anſwer'd me Smiling, *What would you have one do, Sir? 'Tis the Cuſtom of this Country, to entertain the Children that come to be Catechized, with ſuch Stories as theſe; becauſe without this we ſhould have none of their Company. It is impoſſible to tell them always True ones; and therefore we are ſometimes fain to be beholding to our Inventions for them. Things are only ſo far Evil, as they produce ill Effects; but theſe ſorts of Stories cannot but in time bring forth very good Fruits, as that of inſpiring them with great Confidence in the Saints, and obliging them to Pray, and cauſe Maſſes to be ſaid in Honour of them.* What think you? Is not this an excellent piece of ſound Morality? And are not theſe Children, think you, well Taught? They are call'd to the School of Truth, and yet they teach them nothing but Lies. In the mean time, there is nothing capable of making a greater impreſſion on our Spirits, or of fixing a thing more laſtingly in our Memory, than what we learn in our firſt and tender Youth: All theſe Fooliſh Diſcourſes do not fail of producing very great effects, and of paſſing at laſt for current Truth in the Minds of the *Papiſts*, who, beſides this, are accuſtomed very glibly to

ſwallow

ſwallow a great number of Abſurdities and Contradictions in the point of *Tranſubſtantiation*, which they ſo ſtiffly maintain; and this is it probably, that has ſo over-run *Italy* with Fables, and impertinent and ridiculous Stories. Yet theſe People are ſo infatuated therewith, that in caſe any Honeſt Man and Lover of Truth, ſhould ſeem too curiouſly to enquire after theſe matters, or in the leaſt to diſapprove them, he would paſs for no better than an Heretick. Thus a certain perſon was caſt into the *Inquiſition*, for ſaying, That *He did not believe what was told of the Aſs of S.* Anthony *of* Padua, *that kneeled down to worſhip the Hoſt, to confound the Proteſtants.*

From this firſt Cauſe of *Miracles*, which is the *Covetouſneſs of the Clergy*, I proceed to the Second, which is the *Slight and Cunning of certain Beggars.*

Poverty is a Well-ſpring of Great Bleſſings to thoſe who do bear it patiently, taking it as from the Hand of God, and making good uſe of it; but withal, it is no leſs a Gulph of all Miſery and Unhappineſs, to thoſe who receive it with a contrary Spirit; and I don't believe there is any Wickedneſs comparable to that of a Wicked Beggar. A Wicker Beggar hath no Conſcience; he is diſpos'd to undertake any thing in order to rid himſelf from the wretched Circumſtances of his deſtitute condition. There be many of this ſort in *Italy*, who Live by their Wits and Invention: There are ſome that have the Patience, to counterfeit themſelves Cripples, Blind, or ſtruck with the

Palſie for five or ſix years together, to make the World at leaſt believe, that a *Miracle* has been wrought upon them, attributing their Recovery to ſome Image of the Virgin, or to ſome Saint. The Profit which accrues to them by this is, That the People being informed of the *Miracle* that hath been wrought for them, preſently believe them to be very Good Men, and Great Friends of God, as having receiv'd ſuch ſignal Favours from him: This makes them to beſtow Liberal Alms upon them, to have a ſhare in their Prayers: Yea, it oft happens, That ſome Rich and Devout perſons take care of, and make ſuch Proviſion for them, that they never want all the Remainder of their Lives. The *Prieſts* and the *Monks* alſo afford them an Allowance, when at any times by this means they bring any of their Chappels in Vogue and Requeſt, ſo as they receive conſiderable Profit thereby. I have been ſhewn many of theſe Beggars in *Convents* and *Monaſteries*; who Live there amongſt the Domeſticks in great Eaſe, and without doing any thing.

The Third ſpring from whence *Miracles* iſſue in *Italy*, is a *Popular Error*; which is crept in amongſt them, and at preſent has taken ſuch deep root, that is in a manner impoſſible to pluck it up. 'Tis this, Upon the leaſt Accident, that happens to the *Italians*, and the leaſt Sickneſs or Indiſpoſition that ſeizeth them, they make a Vow to ſome Statue or Image of the *Virgin*, or of ſome Saint, to be deliver'd from it. Now it is evident, that all Miſhaps do not prove Fatal to Life, neither do all

Diſeaſes

Diſeaſes terminate in Death, ſo that many times they eſcape and are reſtor'd to Health again; which by a ſtrange Superſtition, inſtead of attributing the Glory thereof to God alone, who is the ſole LORD of *Life* and *Death*, they attribute the Recovery of their Health, or their Deliverance from Danger, to the Statues or Images to whom they have made their Vows: To make their acknowledgment of the Favour they have received the more Authentick, in compliance with the ill Cuſtom introduc'd amongſt them, they cauſe a Picture to be Drawn, wherein is ſet forth what happned to them, and themſelves, in the Act of imploring the Aid of the ſaid Statue or Image, which to that purpoſe is repreſented in one of the Corners of the Picture, and towards which they ſtretch forth their Arms or Folded-Hands with theſe Three Letters underneath P. G. R. which ſignifie in *Italian Pro Gratia Ricevuta*; *For a Favour or Grace Received.*

Theſe Vow'd Pictures we generally find in all the Churches of *Italy*; neither is there any of them without ſome Miraculous Image, which receives the Honour of all thoſe Deliverances and Favours, and to whoſe Glory thoſe Shipwreck-Tables are hung up. There is no need of any Tapiſtry or Hangings in theſe ſorts of Chappels; for theſe ſmall Pictures are ſo thick hung, that they cover all the Walls. There are of them of all ſorts: Some of them repreſent perſons perſu'd by Murtherers; others, that have been Wounded; and others, Beaten at Sea by Furious Tempeſts. Yea, there

are not wanting ſome of them that are very Scandalous; for we find amongſt them Coaches full of Gentlemen and Ladies overthrown, and they tumbling over one another; Young Women that are forced by their Lovers, and Women in Child-Bed, repreſented in their Beds in a very wanton and indecent manner. An *Italian* Lord told me, *That he very willingly went to hear Maſs at thoſe Altars, that were beſt hung with ſuch Pictures as theſe; becauſe meeting in them with ſomething for his Imagination to feed upon, the Service of the Maſs did ſeem leſs tedious to him.* Theſe *Pictures*, which are no more than ſimple Vows, have acquir'd ſo great Credit in the Minds of the People, that they paſs at preſent for Real Miracles: And the *Prieſts* and *Monks*, who write the Hiſtories of the Places of Devotion, which belong to them, make no difficulty to alledge them as ſuch. So that now in *Italy*, they count the *Miracles* by theſe *Pictures*; and the more of theſe any Statue or Image hath about it, the more Miraculous it is.

I will take this occaſion to tell you of a *Picture*, which ſome young *Monks* of the Abby of S. *Victor* in *Milan* caus'd to be made whilſt I was there. The Accident which hapned to them was this: They were Gilding the Roof of one of the Lower-Iſles of the Church. Theſe *Monks*, out of Curioſity, whilſt the Work-men were gone to get their Dinner, did climb up the Scaffold to the number of Seven or Eight of them, to View their Work; where one of them leſs heedful than the reſt,

Treading

Treading upon a Board that was not well faſtned, fell down upon the Floor of the Church. All the reſt being affrighted at this Accident, and ſuppoſing that the whole Scaffold was coming down, betook themſelves to Ladders, and let themſelves ſlide down by them, without receiving any hurt, except only the poor *Monk*, who Fell down with the looſe-Board; who was much bruiſed. They took him up in this pitiful condition, and was obliged to keep his Bed Two or Three Months before he was fully Recovered.

I was preſent when the Accident hapned, and could ſee nothing in all this, but what was very Natural. He who fell, hurt himſelf proportionably to the height from whence he came down, and the reſt receiv'd no hurt at all, becauſe they ſlid down by the Ladders: In all this there appears nothing of a *Miracle*; however, becauſe the Scaffold was erected before the Chappel of S. *Bernard* of *Sienna*, the Monks concluded, That without doubt this Saint had helped them. Accordingly they got a *Picture* drawn, repreſenting their Fall, in one Corner whereof the Saint was Painted, ſtretching forth his hands for their ſafety. They publiſh'd every where throughout the City, That this Saint had upheld them in their Fall from receiving any harm. The Cardinal-Archbiſhop was immediately acquainted therewith, and every one did Congratulate them, for being ſo much in Favour with that Saint.

From this Example, and what before I have told you upon this Head of *Miracles*, you may eaſily

conceive, how far we are to give credit to thoſe fine Legends, of the Lives of the *New Saints* of the *Romiſh Church*; and of what weight that Great Liſt of *Miracles* ought to be with us, which are the chief ſtuffing and garniture of them. There is not one of them that has not reſtored Sight to the Blind, Hearing to the Deaf, Speech to the Dumb, and a clever uſe of their Limbs to Cripples; and in a word, They have preſerv'd from all ill Accidents, and Cured all manner of Diſeaſes. But when one comes to an Enquiry into Particulars, all this vaniſheth in Smoak, and the whole of the Matter is redu'd to ſome *Pictures*, which ſome ſuperſtitious Ones (who without Reaſon have imagin'd themſelves, to have receiv'd Favours from them) have caus'd to be made. However, when theſe *Legends* are ſent to ſtrange Countries, that are of the *Romiſh Communion*, they make a great Noiſe, and are all lookt upon as *Miracles*, ſufficiently confirm'd by Authentick Proof and Evidence. 'Tis a common Reproach caſt upon Proteſtants, *That no Miracles are done amongſt them*; and they will needs have this to be an invincible Argument, to prove they are in an Error. A *Jeſuit* in a Latin Oration, pronounc'd in the Cathedral of *Strasbourgh*, ſoon after that the *French* had taken poſſeſſion of it, exclaim'd in theſe words; *Quid dubitamus de falſitate Religionis eorum, apud quos ceſſavit Prophetæ & Sacerdos, & Miracula periêre? What do we doubt any longer of the Falſneſs of their Religion, with whom both Prieſt and Prophet are ceaſed, and*

Miracles

Miracles are loſt? The Proteſtants might very well have Anſwer'd him with Truth, *That there can be no reaſon of doubting, but that a Religion ſo fraught with Superſtition and Counterfeit Miracles, as the Papiſts Religion is, muſt needs be Falſe.* The Profeſſion of a Good Chriſtian is, to live according to the Goſpel; but not to confirm it by Miracles; this is the Work of God alone, and therefore we ought not to reproach one another upon that ſcore. We ſee every day, that Juglers, (tho' we know they deceive us, and tho' we Eye them with all the Attention imaginable, for to diſcover their Artifice,) are notwithſtanding ſo dextrous at their Tricks, that they gull us before our Face; and ſhall we blindly believe all the *Italian* Prieſts and Monks tell us, who have the Gift of Cheat and Invention? *Sic notus* Ulyſſes? For my part, conſidering the Times in which we live, I will never believe any Miracle, as long as my Reaſon tells me, the Thing was feaſible by Men.

'Tis commonly held, That the Body of S. *Nicholas* of *Bar*, in the *Pouille*, is Miraculous; and that from his Tomb there continually diſtils an Oil very Salutiferous, and proper to reſtore the ſick to Health; but it is enough for me to diſbelieve this Miracle; becauſe I know, that Men may eaſily convey the Oil thither, and ingeniouſly make it to diſtill down. I have ſometimes ſeen ſome poor *Pilgrims*, who returned from that Pilgrimage, and who had little Bottles full of this Oil, which had coſt them Mony enough, who would

would afterwards fain have given it for a piece of Bread; but could find no Cuſtomers to take it off their Hands. Which makes it evident, That the *Italians*, for all their Bigotry, had no Belief in it themſelves. In like manner at *Naples*, the *Prieſts* make ſhew of a Bottle, which they aver to be full of the Blood of S. *Januarius*, Archbiſhop of that City: When at firſt they bring forth this Blood to be ſeen, it appears all Congeal'd; but as they approach it to the Body of this Saint, it diſſolves by degrees. As to this alſo, it is ſufficient ground for me not to believe it, becauſe I know that this Liquor may be congealed, in the manner as they make *Sorbets*, and afterwards diſſolve by the Heat of the place where they ſhew it, or by the heat of the Hands of thoſe who handle it. At *Padua* is to be ſeen the Tomb of S. *Anthony* of *Padua*, which ſends forth a very ſweet Scent between that of *Ambergris* and *Muſk*. The Fryers of that Convent tell us, That this Odour proceeds from the Bones of that Saint, which are ſhut up there: But the Teſtimony of theſe Fellows, who are ſo byaſs'd by their Intereſt, does not give me any ſatisfaction, as long as I know that they may eaſily anoint it with Odoriferous Quinteſſences, as it is certain they do; becauſe that this Odour is the very ſame with that of the perfumed *Pater-noſters*, that are ſold in the Shops at *Padua*. In the ſame place they ſhew us, in a very fair Chryſtal, ſupported by a ſtately Pedeſtal of Gold, extreamly well wrought, the *Tongue* of the ſaid Saint, which they ſay was found in his Tomb,

Tomb, being endued with the Priviledge of *Incorruption*, all the reſt of his Fleſh being conſumed. They have the Impudence to aver, That this Tongue, for having been a Laſh to the *Sacramentarians* of his Time, has been preſerv'd thus ſound and whole, without the leaſt Taint of Corruption, that as a perpetual Miracle, it might bear witneſs to the Truth of the Doctrin of *Tranſubſtantiation*. The greateſt part of the *Romiſh Legends* tell us, it is as freſh and lively as when the Saint was alive; but that is very falſe, for I have ſeen it, and it is dry. Thoſe who have the Art of Embalming Bodies, may preſerve a Tongue, in this manner for many Years, yea, many Ages, without any thing extraordinary, or ſo much as bordering upon a Miracle.

Thus I have given you a View, Sir, of the moſt Famous and Avowed Miracles of *Italy*, which the *Roman Catholicks* pretend to be ſo palpable and ſenſible, that they cannot be deny'd, without giving the Lie to Senſe and Reaſon. I will add to theſe, Three Bodies of Saints, which have been preſerv'd without any Taint of Corruption, and which I have ſeen all Three; The one is, the Body of S. *Roſe* of *Viterbo*; the other of S. *Clara* of *Monfaucon*; and the third of S. *Katharine* of *Bononia*. Theſe Bodies have been preſerved whole and uncorrupted; but without any the leaſt Beauty, being altogether dryed up, and as hard as Paſt-board, and very black; they are very frightful to behold, notwithſtanding they have dreſt them in very rich Habits, and adorn'd them with more

Jewels,

Jewels, than Queens are embeliſh'd with on their Coronation-days. Some have a great Eſteem for theſe incorrupted Bodies, and ſo ſhould I too, in caſe they enjoyed their former lively Tincture and Natural Colour; but to be ſo dry, ſo black, and ſo ghaſtly, it were more eligible in my mind, to return to the Univerſal way of all Fleſh, than to be made partakers of ſuch a kind of Incorruption; neither can I ſee that God herein hath conferr'd any great Favour upon theſe Bleſſed Saints, by preſerving them in a condition proper to terrifie Nature, and affright Mankind. The Works of God are all perfect, he never beſtows a Favour by halves, and if he were pleaſed to grant Incorruption to Bodies, he would alſo probably preſerve them, with all the Natural qualities belonging to them. Wherefore I don't believe, That the defective Incorruptions of the Bodies of theſe Saints can truly be aſcribed to any thing elſe, but the dexterity of thoſe who have dried or embalmed them.

We ſaw at the *Chartreuſe* of *Venice* the Body of a Noble *Venetian*, which being Embalmed, has been preſerved whole and entire for above an Hundred years. This perſon was never accounted a Saint, and yet I found his Body much fairer to the Eye, than were thoſe of the Three Saints now mentioned, tho' it be much more diſregarded and neglected than they are; for they have left the Body in an old Wooden-Coffin, which does not ſhut cloſe, and where all thoſe that go to the *Chartreuſe* do view it and touch it; whereas the

Bodie

Bodies of these Saints are kept in very dry Chappels, where the great Wax-Tapers, that burn Day and Night, purifie the Air, and clear it of all moistures and impurity. I have also seen in *France*, at *Vandosme*, in the Collegiate Church of the Castle, the Body of *Jane d' Albret*, who died a very zealous *Protestant*, above an Hundred years since; her Body hath been very well Embalmed; and if at present one would take it up from the place where it lies, and dress it, and keep it in a very dry place, it would undoubtedly appear much fairer, than that of these Religious: And yet I am very well assured, the *Roman Catholicks* will never say, she was a Saint.

And forasmuch as I am now upon the Chapter of these Saints, I shall acquaint you, That I have often read the History of their Lives, and of many others in the *Legends* of the Church of *Rome*; but never in all my Life did I meet with any thing more ridiculous: And I have observed, that these are those Propheteſſes of which the *Jesuit* spoke at *Strasbourgh*, and which the *Protestants* are depriv'd of, *Apud quos cessavit Propheta*; *who have no Prophets among them.* In a manner, all their Religious, (after that they are arrived to the state of *Perfection*, as they call it) take upon them to Prophesie. For the better understanding of this, you may take notice, That at *Rome* they have distinguish'd or divided the Spiritual Life, into several States; as an House hath many Stories, the Lowermost, the Middle, and the Highest or Uppermost. There is one State they call *Active*; this

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is the Loweſt, and conſiſts only in Action, and an orderly regulation of the Senſes, according to the Law of God: The ſecond is the *Contemplative State*, which conſiſts in the Meditation of thoſe things which have no Communication with the Senſes: The third is a State *Extatical*, abſtracted and purely *Paſſive*; in which the Soul does nothing but by a ſimple Application, Adhæſion, and Union with the Divine Eſſence; receives (without any Action, Affection, or Contemplation on her part) Impreſſions from God. There are but few that arrive to this Uppermoſt Story; but when any are once got thither, whatever Word they utter, or Action they do, 'tis no more they themſelves who Act or Speak, but God that Speaks and Acts in them; for as for them, they never depart from this their intimate Union with God. Whatſoever they ſay or ſpeak in this State, is very carefully heeded, as being all Divine: If they ſpeak of Things paſt, they are *Revelations*; if of Things to come, they are all *Prophecies*. 'Tis by this Door ſo many New Notions are entred into the Church of *Rome*, which they believe as firmly as the Goſpel, tho' they have no other Foundation, but the over-heated Brains of theſe Saints. Many of theſe have themſelves Pen'd their own Revelations, as *S. Brigit*, *S. Melchilda*, S. *Catharine* of *Sienna*, S. *Gertrude*, and many others. By means of theſe Sainteſſes, the Church of *Rome* hath attain'd the knowledge of all the Particularities of our Saviours Paſſion; how many ſtroaks he received at his Whipping; how often he fell to the Ground, under

under the heavy burthen of his Croſs; how many Thorns pierc'd his Sacred Head; and how many times they Spat in his Holy Face. By the ſame way they have diſcover'd whatſoever hapned in the Manger at *Bethlehem*; how the *Bleſſed Virgin* took the Veil from her Head, and made Clouts of it for her Little *Jeſus*; what ſhe ſaid and did, before ſhe was Deliver'd of him; and a vaſt Number of other Particulars, which are not to be met with in the Goſpel. By this means they were informed of the Great Myſtery of the *Aſſumption* of the *Bleſſed Virgin*; when ſhe aſcended up to Heaven in Soul and Body, the Diſcourſe ſhe had with the Apoſtles, how ſhe by degrees mounted up into the Air, beſtowing her Bleſſings all the way ſhe went. In a word almoſt all the new Doctrin of Popery, is derived from this over-flowing Spring, which is not yet dryed up, nor ever will as long as there are any of theſe Propheteſſes left in their Church. To give more weight to theſe new Imaginations, theſe Saints, aſſured, that Jeſus Chriſt appeared to them very often, and was become very Familiar with them, that he talk'd with them as a Bridegroom does with his Bride, and that they took occaſion in theſe Familiarities, to ask him whatſoever they deſired to know. Jeſus Chriſt himſelf taught S. *Catharine* of *Sienna* to read, he came and did blow the Fire for her, he ſwept her Chamber, as may be ſeen in the Hiſtory of her Life, by which means ſhe had an occaſion of Diſcourſing him often. Others of them received Viſits from Jeſus Chriſt, who came and Viſited them, accompanied with

with his Mother and his Apoſtles; where they had great Conferences together, and theſe Sainteſſes that heard them, diſcovered many ſecrets and Myſteries in their Diſcourſe, which they afterwards Communicated to the Popes and the Church; and this is that which at this day, in a great Meaſure, makes the difference that is between the Doctrin of the Papiſts, and that of the Proteſtants. *Apud quos ceſſavit Propheta*, who have no Prophets to boaſt of. There is never a Convent of Nuns in *Italy*, that has not ſome Propheteſs, which is always ſome old Mother, that hath been twice or thrice Superior of the Convent, and who not being in a condition of doing any thing elſe, applies her ſelf to the Unitive Life.

During the long ſtay I made at *Vicenza*, I often went to Viſit the Abbeſs of the Nuns of S. *Thomas*: I upon a time enquired of her concerning the State of her Nuns, who told me that ſhe had Forty four that were in the Active Life, three in the Contemplative, and one only in the Myſtical or Unitive. A young Counteſs, who was in the ſame Convent, and who was Viſited by four or five Galants, who came to ſee her at the Grate, was got no further yet than the Active Life. I will engage my ſelf no further at preſent in entertaining you, about the Nuns of *Italy*, becauſe probably I may have an occaſion to do it more at leiſure.

I return now to my ſhe Saints, whoſe Bodies remain Uncorrupt. They were all three of them arrived at the Unitive State, and have all of them left Prophecies behind them: S. *Roſe* of *Viterbo*, did

did for a long time importune the *Dominican* Nuns of that City to receive her amongſt them, and to give her the Habit of their Order; but the Nuns knowing ſhe was extreamly poor, and that ſhe could not, as the reſt did, bring mony to the Convent, refuſed her Company, and would not ſo much as receive her into the number of their Convert Siſters. The Saint underſtanding this their rejecting of her, told them, That tho' they would have none of her now ſhe was alive, yet they ſhould be very glad to have her when ſhe was dead. This Prophecy prov'd true; for *Roſe* being deceaſed with the Odour of Sanctity, and many Miracles, after the *Italian* manner, being wrought at her Tomb, theſe ſame Nuns deſired her Body, which was granted them. The great number of Maſſes which are procur'd to be ſaid to her, and the abundance of Alms that Travellers and Pilgrims do leave there, makes them conſider this Body at preſent as their greateſt Treaſure. This Prophecy of S. *Roſe* was very eaſie to be made; ſhe knew ſhe was already far enough advanced in the good Opinion of the People, for to make them eſteem her a Saint after her Death. She knew moreover, that the Bodies of ſuch are always very gainful, that the Nuns of that Convent, as well as others in *Italy*, were very covetous; and that by Virtue of a Vow ſhe had made to S. *Dominicus*, they would not fail to demand her Relicks, as of right belonging to them, and ſo was in a Condition to Prophecy on a ſure ground. The Saint whoſe Body is to be ſeen at *Monte Faucon*, is ac-

companied with ſomething that is very remarkable; they ſhew you all the Inſtruments of the Paſſion of our Saviour, which, they ſay, were found in her Heart after her Deceaſe; they are all of dried Fleſh, like as her Heart is; They are very confuſed, neither are all of them ſufficiently diſtinguiſhable or diſcernable. They ſhew you likewiſe three little round Pellets of Fleſh, which, they ſay, were likewiſe taken out of her Heart. One of theſe Pellets being laid in a pair of Scales, weighs as much as all the three together, and all the three weigh no more than one alone. This makes them ſay, That God was willing to imprint in the Heart of this Saint, a Reſemblance of the moſt Holy Trinity: for in like manner, as theſe three Pellets, tho' different in number, yet make but one weight, and that the weight of one alone, is no leſs than that of all the three together; ſo likewiſe tho' there be three Perſons in the Holy Trinity, yet there is but one Eſſence; and one of theſe Perſons is no leſs in Divine Perfections, than the other two. I have ſeen theſe three Pellets, but ſo far are they from ſuffering one to try the Experiment, that they will not ſuffer you to touch it with your finger, to feel whether it be Fleſh or no. Every one knows that a ſtrong Imagination is capable of producing ſtrange effects in the Body. We ſee every day Children that come into the World bearing the marks of their Mothers Longings, which are the effects of their Imagination. It may be that this Saint did ſo ſtrongly imagin the Inſtruments of the Paſſion, as to leave them engraved

graved in her Heart; but it ſeems to me, that this is a violence done to Nature, which can no way be pleaſing to God, who is the Author of it. As for S. *Catherine* of *Bononia*, ſhe more particularly render'd her ſelf famous by her abſtracted Life. The Hiſtory of her Life tells us, that ſhe was in a continual Union with God. Doctor *Molinus* was no ſtranger to this Unitive Life, for this is that he calls his Prayer of Reſt: I doubt not at all, but that one day he would have been one of the Saints of *Rome*, had not Obedience to Superiours, and particularly to the Pope, been concerned in the Caſe. The Pope will ſuffer you to unite with God, as much as you pleaſe, provided always that this Union do not hinder you from obeying him, more than God himſelf. I doubt not indeed, but that there may be even to this day perfect Souls amongſt them that are ravilhed even into the third Heaven; but theſe are extraordinary Graces, which do not depend on any natural endeavour we can exert to obtain them. But when I conſider that the *Roman Catholicks* have made a fixed ſtate of this Union, that they preſcribe Rules to attain it, and it is ſufficient, according to them, to put themſelves into the hands of one of theſe Myſtical or Unitive Doctors, and follow their directions, in order to arrive at this ſtate. When I conſider this, I ſay, I cannot but condemn their Error. 'Tis a piece of Impiety to make the Divine Operations dependant on the Humours of Men; to give Rules for the obtaining of that by way of Merit, which is the meer Gift of Grace, and to make ones

ſelf the Diſpenſer and Diſpoſer of the Gifts of Heaven, as theſe ſorts of Doctors pretend to do. Moreover, the ill Conſequences that follow from hence are very pernicious to Souls. Firſt of all, this Aſſurance only, received from theſe myſtical Maſters, of once being advanced to the Unitive Life, whilſt ſo many others are left behind in the Contemplative and Active Lives, which are ſo far below it, is very proper to inſpire the Parties concern'd with Pride and vain Glory. Secondly, This may prove a very great Diſcouragement to thoſe who are neceſſarily engaged in an Active Life, to conſider that there are ſuch perfect States beyond them, which it is impoſſible for them ever to attain to, becauſe theſe Doctors do not think them fit to be admitted thereto. Thirdly, This opens a Door to manifold Superſtitions and Errors; for they who are engaged in the Active Life, never take the pains to examin what the Contemplative ſay; nor theſe, what the Unitive or Myſtical do alledge for Truth: So that the two firſt do both of them rely upon theſe laſt, who for the moſt part are perſons of weak Brains, and moſt extravagant Thoughts, who believe, that whatſoever they ſpeak or act is from God. It is evident that the Opinion of Tranſubſtantiation is only an effect of their Whimſeys, by the Impropriety, Abuſe and Confuſion of the Terms they make uſe of to explain themſelves. For in like manner, as they call their Myſtical Life ſometimes Union, Unity, Identity, Confuſion or mingling of the Soul with God; ſometimes the Loſs of the Soul in God; the pure ſight of God;

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Peaceable poſſeſſion of God; and many more which may be in the Books that treat of the Myſtical Life, whereof ſome are very falſe and impious, as thoſe of Unity, Identity, Confuſion and Loſing of ones ſelf in God, and all the others do only belong to the Future Life: Now in like manner, ſay I, as they make uſe of theſe Terms to ſignifie a ſimple adherence, complyance and acquieſcence of our Souls in the good pleaſure of God, which cannot produce Identification; ſo of old Times they called the Holy Supper, The real Union of Jeſus Chriſt with our Souls, and the Bread we partake therein, the Truth, Reality, and Subſtance of the Body of Jeſus Chriſt, which notwithſtanding is only there in a Figure: And afterwards, when this Errour had taken good rooting, it brought forth this big word of *Tranſubſtantiation*, which at this day makes the chief difference between Papiſts, who maintain it Tooth and Nail, and the Proteſtants who oppoſe it. Neither is it any great matter of wonder, that an Errour of ſuch Conſequence is crept into the Church of *Rome*, without making any great Noiſe; for in the firſt place, there was nothing in it contradictory to the Popes Authority: And again, it was not lawful for the People to examin what the myſtical Tribe aſſerted; inſomuch that even to this day in *Italy*, if you chance in diſcourſe with a Contemplative or Unitive Perſon to contradict them in any thing, they tell you very freely, That theſe are matters too high for your Capacity, and that you are to believe them in the things they aſſert, as being better acquainted than

you with the ways of God, and as having already ſpent a conſiderable time in tracing the myſtical Paths of a Spiritual Life. I have ſcarce ever ſeen any of theſe myſtical Perſons, but were very proud: They look upon themſelves as Eagles who take their flights in the higheſt part of the Air, and upon other Men, as Beaſts creeping upon the Earth. A common and humble Life, full of Affability, Benignity and Sweetneſs towards ones Neighbour, ſhall always be more deſirable to me than all theſe great Sublimations of Spirit, which are apt to inſpire men with ſo much pride: And if ever it ſhall pleaſe God to raiſe me to the high degree of Contemplation or Union, it ſhall be his Work, and not the effect of any Rule or Direction which men can afford me. In *Italy* they make a kind of trade of it, and if a man doth not put himſelf into the hands of ſome of theſe myſtical Doctors, who pretend to be old Travellers and throughly well acquainted with the way to Heaven, and who profeſs the Art of Guiding Souls thither, he can never hope of arriving there. Theſe Profeſſors are ordinarily old Jeſuits, old Capuchins, or old Fathers Miſſionaries, who being no more able to ſcout it up and down in ſtrange Countries, in *Holland* and in *England* to pervert Proteſtants, apply themſelves in their Convents to play the Seraphick Fathers, to the end they may be followed by a Company of he and ſhe Votaries, whom they diſcourſe to Morning and Evening in their Churches. When they are met together in their Aſſemblies, you hear nothing but ſighs, groans, and

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ſome broken words, at another gueſs rate than the *Quakers* in *England*; and certainly in this reſpect they have nothing to caſt them in the teeth with. The Director is ſeated in his Confeſſional Chair, in the midſt of all theſe People, whom he calls his Sons and Daughters; and there, as from a Tribunal or Throne, he determines, without Appeal of their ſighs, and of their Poſtures, whether they proceed from God, the Devil, or Self-love: Young women or married are ſeldom found at theſe ſorts of Aſſemblies, becauſe commonly they are kept on Working-days, on which days the *Italians* keep them ſhut up under Lock and Key; but they are commonly Widows and old Maids, who have no perſons to command them. They call them in *Italy Beati*, or Bleſſed Ones, Good Siſters, Devout Women, and ſometimes by way of deriſion, Bigots. The Father Directors are very zealous of their Advancement in the myſtical Life, and never leave them, till they have ſo wholly diveſted them of all Love for the good Things and Riches of this World, that to be delivered from the Burthen of them, they ſettle them on their Convent: Then it is they are arrived at perfection. They call them Siſters, and tell them that having made a Gift of their Goods to their Monaſteries, 'tis the ſame thing, as if they had profeſſed amongſt them. They beſtow upon them pieces of their Habits, they call them *Little Scapularies*, which they wear under their Bodies: By Virtue of which Bits of Cloth, they are made partakers of all the good Works they do, and of all the Graces, Privileges,

ges; Bleſſings and Indulgences granted to their Order: When they are dead they bury them in their Churches, and they endeavour, if they can, to make them paſs for Saints, for an Encouragement to others. And indeed, it is very eaſie for them to do it; to this purpoſe they have but this courſe to take; the firſt ſick perſon they go to viſit they amply diſcourſe about the high ſtate of Perfection to which Madam ſuch an one was arrived, who was lately buried in their Church; That they do not doubt in the leaſt, but ſhe is a great Saint, and that if the ſick perſon can reſolve to pray to and call upon her with full aſſurance, they queſtion not but ſhe will work a Miracle in favour of him: Yea, they many times offer to bleſs ſome Wine, Syrup, or ſome other Liquor in the name of this Saint, or to dip it in ſomething or other that in her Life-time ſhe uſed to wear, as her Diſcipline, or *Pater Noſter*: And having done this, they offer this Liquor to the ſick party to drink, who if they chance to recover, the Saint hath wrought a Miracle; they cauſe a Picture to be drawn of what has hapned, which they carry to the Saints Tomb. But if it happen that the Patient die, or that the Sickneſs continue very long, there is not a word made of it, but all huſh'd in hopes of a better opportunity for the future. Thoſe who are any thing acquainted with the ſtate of Affairs in *Italy*, know that in all this I advance nothing but what is very true. Hence it is eaſie to conceive by what weans ſo many new Saints are entred into the Church of *Rome*, to whom at preſent

ſent Altars are erected. It is to no purpoſe to alledge here, the great Precautions they take at *Rome*, in examining matters of Fact in the verbal Proceſſes they make of their Canonization; ſo that it is impoſſible for any thing to eſcape the cognizance of thoſe who have the charge of it. Alas, it is but too well known, how great a power Silver and Gold have at *Rome*; and it is certain, they never Canonize any Saint, but it brings them in immenſe ſums of mony. In caſe any difficulties be ſtarted, 'tis only to get the mony doubled.

My deſign at firſt, was only to give you ſome account of the *Italick* Pilgrimages; but the occaſion of mentioning theſe three Saints, whoſe Bodies are preſerved in Incorruption, have put me upon this Digreſſion. Wherefore to make an end in few words of what I have yet to ſay of my firſt Subject, you may take notice, that all other Pilgrimages of *Italy*, beſides thoſe of *Loretto*, *Rome*, and S. *Anthony* of *Padua*, are very inconſiderable. Some Pilgrims go to S. *Michael*, which is at Mount *Gargan* in the *Poville*, others to S. *Nicholas* of *Bar*; but the moſt that go to theſe places are Beggars, becauſe the way thither is very troubleſom from the City of *Naples*, lying all over high Mountains, and the Inhabitants of that Country are almoſt all Robbers: The *Italian* Lords are very backward to lead their Ladies a walk thither, with their Pilgrim-Staves all ſet with Diamonds. The delicious march of *Ancona*, is much more proper and ſecure for this ſort of Pilgrims: The Pilgrimage of S. *Anthony* of *Padua* in the pleaſant *Venetian*

tian Country, is for the ſame reaſon much more ſuitable to them. There be very few *Italians*, who do not take this Journy every Three years; and ſome of them go regularly every year. This Saint has gain'd ſo great Credit in *Italy*, that he is of equal eſteem with the Virgin, yea, with God himſelf: Some with a great deal of reaſon have called him the God of *Italy*, *Italiæ Deus*. When an *Italian* has ſworn by S. *Antonio*, 'tis the greateſt Oath he can ſwear. And whereas in other Countries they are wont to ſay, *I intend to go to ſuch or ſuch a place at ſuch a time, if God preſerve my Life*; or, *I'ld do this or that, if it pleaſe God*; 'tis their cuſtom to ſay, *I'le go thither, or do this, if it pleaſe the Virgin and S.* Anthony. Their moſt common Interjection, when ever they are in any danger, ſurprize or admiration, is to cry, *Madonna Santiſſima!* or S. *Antonio!* And by a ſtrange kind of Blaſphemy, tho' they make it a great Point of Devotion, they have the Impiety to ſay, *I hope in S.* Anthony, *that I ſhall never periſh.* They call him The Saint, by way of Emphaſis, *Il Santo*, which is a great Honour, but of right due to God only, to whom the Angels cry continually, *Holy, Holy, Holy!* There is never a Church in *Italy*, where there is not an Altar dedicated to S. *Anthony* of *Padua*. They make their Addreſſes in particular to this Saint for all things that are loſt, to which purpoſe they tell you this following ſtory:

A rich *Venetian* Merchant being at Sea, by miſchance let a Diamond of a very great price fall

fall into the Sea, who immediately upon his return to *Venice* went to *Padua*, and betook himself *al Santo*; he desired the Fryars of that Convent to say Nine Masses for him, and to joyn their Prayers with his, for the recovery of his Diamond. The ninth day, after his Nine Masses were ended, the Merchant designing to treat all the Monks of the Convent with a Dinner, he bought amongst other things a very large Fish and sent it to them; the Fryar Cook having opened and gutted this Fish, found the Diamond in the Intrails of it, which the Merchant had dropt into the Sea; which was immediately restor'd to him, and Thanks return'd to the Saint, who had heard their Prayers.

This story is related at large in the Legend of his Life: But does it not seem to you, Sir, to be contrived or invented of these good Monks, to persuade men to send them in good Dinners, and to get them to say Masses for them?

They tell another pleasant story, which however they were very cautious of inserting in their Legend. The Fryars *del Santo* go without contradiction for the most debauched that are in all *Padua*, and who in this quality out-vie the Scholars themselves of the University. One of these Monks having for some Months sollicited a young Woman to comply with his Lust, she at last fell under the Temptation; but soon after was so extreamly grieved for the sin she had committed, that she was ready to Despair. The Fryar perceiving it, notwithstanding what was past, made a shift to persuade her, that in case she would give him some considerable sum

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of mony, for Masses to be said to S. *Anthony*, that Saint should restore her the Virginity she had lost. Thus besides the satisfying of his Lust, he got mony of her wherewith to glut his Luxury elsewhere. I will not oblige you to believe this story, having no sufficient Warrant to believe it my self: However, sure I am, that these Jolly *Monks*, under the Cloak of their S. *Anthony*, play many Tricks not a whit inferiour to this.

I may possibly have occasion to entertain you with some of them in one of my LETTERS; and in the mean time conclude this, assuring you that I shall be all my Life,

Sir,

Your, &c.

The

The Fifth LETTER,

Of Feſtivals and Confraternities, &c.

SIR,

I Met with nothing conſiderable in my Journy from *Loretto* to *Rome*, ſave the Accident that hapned to me in paſſing of a Bridge, whereof I gave you an Account in my laſt LETTER. I arrived there about *Chriſtmaſs*, and continued in that City all the Holidays, and the *Lent* following, until *Eaſter*. My principal Employment, during my ſtay here, was to frequent their Feſtivals, to hear their Sermons, and to be preſent at their Confraternities; which accordingly I do intend ſhall be the Subject of this preſent LETTER.

This word *Feaſt*, or *Feſtival*, in the Church of *Rome*, properly ſignifies thoſe Days of the Year which are more religiouſly obſerved than the reſt, in honour either of the *Virgin*, or of ſome myſtery of the Goſpel, or of ſome Saint, which we in *England* call *Holidays*. Some of theſe *Feaſts* are Univerſal, others only Particular. The *Univerſal Feaſts* are thoſe, that are generally obſerv'd in all Countries that profeſs the *Romiſh Religion*; and on theſe

theſe days they are bound (under pain of mortal ſin) to go to *Maſs*. The *Particular Feaſts* are ſuch as are only kept in certain Provinces, Cities, Pariſhes, or Chappels. Thus, foraſmuch as at *Rome* there is a prodigious number of Churches and Chappels, it is every day *Holiday* in divers parts of that City.

But they have another ſort of Feaſts in *Italy*, which for diſtinction ſake I may call *Feaſts of Gallantry*. Theſe are when ſome noble or wealthy Perſons, do at their own Coſts and Charges undertake to have the firſt and ſecond *Veſpers*, together with the *Maſs*, ſung in Muſick, in honour of ſome he or ſhe Saint: I give them the Name of *Gallant Feaſts*; not ſo much for the Muſicks ſake, (that is to ſay, for the admirable ſymphony of Voices and Concerts of Inſtruments, which are ſo great a part of them;) but with reſpect to the Ladies who are invited to them, or who do commonly frequent them.

After that I had for ſome Days reſted my ſelf at *Rome*, I went abroad to take a view of the Curioſities and Antiquities of that great City. As I was walking one Evening on the *Piazza Navonna*, I paſſed by a very fine Church, called *De la Pace*: The Porch, which of it ſelf was a moſt exquiſite piece of Architecture, of the faireſt white Marble, was over and above magnificently embelliſh'd and adorn'd with moſt curious Pictures, and a multitude of Figures made of ſmall ſheets of Silk of different colours, of the *Bononia* faſhion. This gave me the curioſity of entring into the Church, where I

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ſaw a very fine Company of Gentlemen, who had cauſed a kind of a Throne to be made for them in a part of the Church, from whence they could very commodiouſly view thoſe who either came in or went out. It was one of theſe Gentlemen, as I underſtood afterwards, at whoſe Appointment and Charges this Feaſt was Celebrated in honour of S. *Agnes*; tho' it was not the day of the year which is Conſecrated to her, *viz.* the 21*ſt* of *January*; But there was another myſtery in the caſe, which we ſhall preſently diſcover.

Theſe young Lords had each of them in their turns appointed the Celebration of their Miſtreſſes Feſtivals: they were eight of them in all, whereof the Four firſt had already kept theirs in other Churches, and this was the Feaſt appointed by the fifth of them. He was of the Family of *Carpegna*, and his Miſtreſſes Name was *Agnes Victorini*. The Church *de la Pace*, that is, of Peace, is extreamly well adorn'd; it is Gilt and Painted all within in like manner, as almoſt all the Churches of *Rome* be; however the more to exalt its Beauty, and to add ſomething peculiar with Relation to the Feaſt now to be ſolemniz'd there, there were ſeveral Triumphal Arches erected in the middle of the Church, which afforded a lively Repreſentation of the Hiſtory of S. *Agnes*, who by her Conſtancy triumphed over all the Torments which Tyrants could inflict upon her.

This whole Hiſtory was repreſented to the Life, with little Scrowls of Silk: Theſe are of different ſizes, and of all ſorts of colours. They know the

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ſet price they are to pay for an Hundred Ells thereof ready wrought, and every one chuſeth what pleaſeth them beſt. There are a ſort of men at *Rome*, and throughout all *Italy*, who are called *Addobbatori*, or *Adorners of Churches*; theſe furniſh the Silk themſelves, and are extreamly Ingenious and Artificial to fold and form them in all manner of ſhapes and figures. They had been three Weeks a preparing theſe Ornaments I am ſpeaking of: There were two Theatres erected on each ſide of the Quire, which were embelliſh'd all over with Hiſtories repreſented in the foreſaid ſilken Figures; the one being deſigned for the Vocal Muſick, the other for the Inſtrumental, each conſiſting of fifty Muſicians: Beſides theſe there were in a little Box near the Altar, four Muſicians, called *Sing-alones*, which were ſaid to be four of the beſt Muſicians that were in *Rome*; who were to ſing by themſelves, the one after the other. They never go any where to ſing but they are paid forty Crowns for each *Motet*.

The *Italians*, more than any other Nation of the World, love Conſorts of Muſick, and thoſe amongſt them that have good Ears, follow theſe excellent Muſicians to all places, ſo that there was a vaſt concourſe to this Church. When I entred, the Muſick was not yet begun, and I took my place near to the Throne, where theſe Gentlemen were ſeated. They ſeemed to be ſomewhat reſtleſs to have *Veſpers* or *Even-ſong* begin, for it was already near ſix a Clock, and all the Wax-Candles had already been lighted above a quarter of

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an hour; and the Muſicians were all at their Poſts. Some Boys that had counted the Wax-Tapers, ſaid there were Four hundred and forty of them, of an extraordinary white Wax. However the Gentlemen, all impatient as they were, durſt not order the beginning of the Ceremony, becauſe the Fair *Agnes*, for whoſe dear ſake all theſe Preparations were made, was not yet come: And foraſmuch as they were willing not to be underſtood, they made uſe of the little *French* they had learnt, to talk to one another. The Principal (who was at the Coſt of this Feſtival, ſomewhat to quiet the mind of his Companions) told them, he was aſſured his *Agnes* would quickly be there; that he had ſent one of his Lackeys, to come and give him Notice, as ſoon as he ſhould ſee her ſet forth from home; that ſhe preciſely knew the hour, and having promiſed to be there, ſhe would certainly be as good as her word. *Some of them anſwer'd him*, That they fear'd leſt her Mother, who was very Difficult and Humorſom, might keep her at home; and adviſed him to ſend another Lackey to acquaint her Mother, That if ſhe would not ſuffer her Daughter to come, *ſhe ſhould repent it*. But juſt as they were in Conſultation about this Point, in comes the firſt Lackey, and tells his Maſter that the long look'd for *Agnes* was coming, and already very near the Church. Whereupon, immediately a Signal was given to the Muſicians to be in a readineſs, and at the very Moment ſhe ſet her Foot in the Church, upon another Signal given them, they Thundred away the firſt *Anthem*

of the common Even-Song for the Feaſt of Virgins, beginning thus, *Hæc eſt Virgo ſapiens & una de numero prudentium. This is a wiſe Virgin and one of the number of the prudent ones.* Whereupon our Gentlemen in a trice changed their reſtleſneſs into an exceſs of Joy and Satisfaction, which might eaſily be read in their faces. I heard them ſay, That Ladies often took pleaſure to make their Lovers wait for them, to make their Preſence, after a long Attendance, the more acceptable and welcom. I ſhould never have known this fair Idol, amongſt thoſe throngs of Ladies, that entred every moment, if the young Gentleman, who had prepared all this Incenſe for her, had not gone to meet her, and lead her to her place. She ſeem'd to me very modeſtly dreſt, having her Head cover'd with a large black Scarf, which almoſt reach'd down to her feet: Her face was wholly cover'd, according to the cuſtom of the Romiſh Ladies, whenever they go abroad. Her Mother follow'd her, the cuſtom of the Country being for the Daughters to go before, and the Mothers after. Near to the Throne where theſe Gentlemen were ſeated, there was prepared for her a *Reading-Deſk*, cover'd with a very fair Carpet of blew Velvet ſet round with a deep golden Fringe, and great Cuſhions of the ſame richly Embroider'd, whereon ſhe and her Mother kneel'd down. I was very near her, and obſerv'd that as long as the Muſick laſted, ſhe did her utmoſt endeavour, under pretext of ſticking ſome Pins about her Head, to diſcover ſome part of her face, in favour of thoſe Gentlemen,

who

who had their Eyes almoſt continually fix'd upon her; ſhe made a ſhift to ſend them ſome Smiles, and to make ſigns to them with her Eyes: Her Breaſts were ſcandalouſly expoſed to view, for there being nothing to cover them, ſave only that part of her Veil, which hung down over them, ſhe knew ſo dexterouſly to play with it, that every one, who was not depriv'd of his Eye-ſight, might at times have a full view of them. In the mean time the Muſick was incomparable and raviſhing, and all the Anthems that were ſung, tho' for the moſt part they were taken out of the *Canticles*, were more applicable to this young Lady, than to S. *Agnes*, whoſe Feaſt they pretended to celebrate. Whilſt I was here, I chanc'd to caſt an Eye upon a Picture of this Saint, which was placed upon the Altar, at which the Maſſes were to be ſaid the next Morning, and I eaſily perceived it to be the very Face of *Agnes Victorina*, except only, that it was ſurrounded with Rayes, as the Saints are uſed to be, and that they had painted a little Lamb by her, as is cuſtomary in all the Repreſentations of S. *Agnes*. I ſaw by this, that the young Gentleman had forgot nothing that might manifeſt his Devotion to his Lady, having taken care to place her upon the very Altars, there to be ador'd by every one. About the middle of the Even-Song, two of theſe Gentlemen took a great Charger, full of Flowers, with an intent to preſent all the Ladies there preſent, with Noſegaies made of *Carnations*, Knops of *Roſes*, and *Orange Flowers* mix'd together, (for at *Rome* you may have any

ſort of Flowers at any Seaſon of the Year. They were tied together with a golden Twiſt, to which was faſtned a fair Knot of about three or four Yards of Riband; ſo that each Noſegay could not be worth leſs than two Crowns, or thereabouts. The firſt of theſe was preſented to the fair *Agnes*; and I took notice, that there was a little Note convey'd between the Flowers, which ſhe immediately took thence and put into her *Hours*, or Book of Devotion, to peruſe it. It was not poſſible for me to diſcern the Contents, and tho' I was very nigh to her, I could not diſcover any more than theſe two words, *Mia Diva*, *My Goddeſs*. No ſooner were theſe Noſegays diſtributed, but there came flying from the upper Galleries of the Church a vaſt quantity of printed Papers, which the people ſtrove to catch. Theſe Prints contain'd Sonnets in the praiſe of St. *Agnes*, but which really and indeed reach'd the Lady, much more than the Saint, for the Poem was almoſt a continual alluſion to Victories; being a ſufficient hint they were calculated for her, whoſe Name was *Victorini*. This Concert of Muſick laſted almoſt four Hours, and it was very late before all was over; however, ſo exceeding charming and delightful was the Muſick, that it ſeem'd to me I had not been above half an hour in the Church.

The next day I return'd thither again, and was preſent at the whole Service; which was celebrated with all the Pomp and Solemnity imaginable. All the Morning they celebrated a great number of Maſſes, and many Abbots (to honour the young

Carpegna

Carpegna and his Mistress) came and said Mass at the Altar, but now mention'd, before the fair Image. At the beginning of High Mass, they threw down from the upper Galleries other Sonnets; some of them in praise of S. *Agnes*, and others in commendation of the young Gentleman, who was the Master of the Festival: For the Priests of this Church finding themselves much oblig'd to him, for that he had been pleased to make choice of their Church for this Solemnity (whence they always reap a considerable Profit) had caused this Poem to be made in praise of his great Devotion and extraordinary worth. There are a sort of Men in *Italy*, whom they call *Virtuosi*, or *Poets*, who make a livelyhood of praising others; that is, of making Encomiastical Songs or Poems. Neither is it expenceful to make use of their Wit; for if you do but give them the Subject, they furnish you with a good one for a single Crown; so that you are at no further Charges, save only that of printing it.

It was One of the Clock in the Afternoon by that time the Morning-Service was ended, when the Ladies retir'd to their own Homes, and the Gentlemen with the Priests to an Apartment near the *Church of Peace*, whither they had taken care to send abundance of Provisions, to make a sumptuous Dinner. The Musicians retired into the Sextry, whither some Hours after they sent in to them several large Dishes of meat, abundance of all sorts of Wine, with sugar'd and cooling Waters. The Notes, distributed to that purpose, specified,

That the ſecond Even-ſong was to begin about Three in the Afternoon; wherefore I made it my buſineſs to be there about that time; but I found I was come too ſoon, for the Muſicians had not din'd yet, more Diſhes of Meat being ſtill ſent in to them, neither did Service begin till about Five of the Clock; and the ſame Order was obſerved as at the former Even-ſong, except only that the Verſes and Anthems were chang'd, and that the Ladies (before they departed) were not only preſented with Noſegays, as before, but with great Chargers of Sweet-meats, with which they fill'd their Handkerchiefs, and ſo return'd home laden with Flowers and Fruits. The young *Carpegna* not a little proud and pleas'd, for having ſo magnificently diſcharg'd all the parts of that Solemnity, receiv'd the Congratulatory Applauſes of all his Companions; and another of them (whoſe turn was next) appointed the next Sunday for a like Feſtival to be celebrated at the Church of S. *Andrew of the Valley*, where he had ordered all things to be prepared for the ſolemnizing of the Feaſt of S. *Catherine*.

I was willing, Sir, ſomewhat to enlarge my ſelf in the deſcription of the particulars of this Feaſt; not as if it were a thing rare and extraordinary, (for indeed, what I have here related is but as One of a Thouſand that I have ſeen, and which it would be very ſuperfluous to repeat to you, there being indeed nothing more common in *Italy*;) but my deſign was only to give you a more diſtinct Idea of this thing, when you ſhall chance to hear

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any discourse concerning these *Italian* Feasts. I have liv'd Seven years in that Country, and in all that time, never did a Week pass over my Head, in which I was not present at some or other of them; wherefore I have reason to be able, to speak with good ground concerning them. I shall only add one thing, which may well make the *Roman Catholicks* blush; *viz.* That it is at these sorts of Feasts, that young Women are debauch'd and corrupted.

There are Bawds, who (by their Emissaries) acquaint them with the places where any of these Feasts are to be kept, whereupon they never fail to resort thither in Troops, very lasciviously dress't: And as for other Women and Maidens, as the only pretext they can have to oblige their Parents or Husbands to let them go abroad, is that of going to Church; they continually sigh and long for these sorts of Feasts, to have so fair an opportunity to go abroad and divert themselves. 'Tis at these Feasts, I say, that Meetings are appointed, and Notes secretly convey'd; here it is they learn to make love with their Eyes, and to discourse one another by Gests and Signs; and in a word, here it is, O shame! that their lewd and infamous Bargains are made. Neither do I assert ought in all this, but what is fully confirm'd by their own Proverb; which tells us, *Chi manda la sua figliuola ad ogni Festa, in puoco Tempo ne fa una Puttana; That he who sends his Daughter to every Feast, will make her a Whore in a short time.* The young and married Women seat themselves on

each ſide of the Church, and the Gentlemen walk in the midſt, whereby they have an opportunity to look them in the face. They puſh one another, they laugh, they talk aloud, and entertain one another with Diſcourſes, very unbecoming the Sacredneſs of the place where they are. The Holy Sacrament, which they believe to be the true living Body of our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, is for the moſt part expoſed upon the High Altar, or in ſome particular Chappel, to make the Solemnity the greater; but they have ſo little reſpect for it, that they turn their backs upon it, to face the Ladies and Muſicians. Whence it is evident, that they do but very ſlightly, if at all, believe that main Point of their Doctrin, or at leaſt, that their Practice gives their Faith the Lye. The Prieſts reap a conſiderable advantage from theſe Feaſts; for all the Ceremonies they officiate, and the Maſſes they ſay, are very dearly paid them, and are highly feaſted into the bargain.

But more particularly, we meet with theſe kind of Feaſts very frequent in Convents or Monaſteries; the Religious whereof may be diſtinguiſh'd into three ſorts, either ſuch as are endowed with means for their Subſiſtence, as generally all thoſe call'd *Monks* are; or elſe they live partly of their Incoms, and partly of Alms, as are all thoſe who are called *Frati*, or *Fryers*; or laſtly, they are ſuch who live wholly upon Alms, as the *Capuchins*, and other *Mendicant* Orders. Now each of theſe are very ambitious, and do their utmoſt endeavours to have of theſe Feaſts made in their Churches.

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The *Monks* deſire it, to make a ſhew of their Riches and Grandeur; the whole Ceremony is carried on at their own Charges, and the Feaſt they make is called a *Pontifical*, and is indeed the moſt pompous and magnificent Show that can be ſeen.

I will endeavour to give you here the moſt exact Deſcription of it that poſſibly I can. To this purpoſe I will take for my Subject one of thoſe I ſaw in the famous Abby of S. *Michael* in *Boſco* of *Bononia*, where I Taught for Two years together, the *Monks* whereof are of the Order of Mount *Olivet*. The Abbot is not Commendatory, but Regular, and has the power of officiating Pontifically. He caus'd his *Pontifical* to be publiſh'd in *Bononia*, three Weeks before the Feaſt of S. *Bernard*, Founder of their Order, which hapned to be on a *Thurſday*; and accordingly the firſt Even-Song began on *Wedneſday* in the Evening. The Church of this Abby is a meer Jewel of a thing, for the extraordinary Curioſity of the *Marble*, *Jaſper*, and *Porphyrie* Stones, that do in part compoſe and embelliſh it; the Guilding and Painting that adorn it, are of an ineſtimable price; the Roof and all the Walls of the Church are Guilt; the High-Altar, as well as the other leſſer ones of the Chappels, are all of precious Stones. All the Seats of the Quire are of In-laid Work, wherein the whole Life of S. *Bennet*, and many Hiſtories of the Bible are repreſented; the Balliſters of Iron, that ſhut the Quire and Chappels, are all Gilt, and very delicately wrought; the Pavement is of

black

black and white Marble; insomuch that there is not the least part in the whole Church, that stands in need of any superadded Ornament. Yet notwithstanding all this, the Abbot sent for the most dexterous Adorners of Churches to set it forth, with the silken Machins of *Bononia*, with which all the Windows and Walls of the Church were fill'd, affording various Historical Representations; tho', to speak the truth, this was a very needless Cost, because what was hid by these silken Figures was more curious and costly, than the Figures themselves. He order'd Arms of Silver to be fixed round the Church, and Candlesticks of the same, to be placed on all the Cornishes and Pillars of the Church, to support a prodigious number of white Wax-Candles, which were to burn all the time of the Service. The High-Altar was set as thick as it could hold with Plate, brought out of the Treasury of that Abby, to make a show of it to all Men. About Three of the Clock in the Afternoon, the Abbot (accompanied with all his Monks) and many Gentlemen of his Relations and Friends following him, marched forwards towards the Church. He was apparel'd in the Habit of his Order, being distinguish'd from the rest of the Monks by his Ring, his Hood, and his four corner'd Cap. The Monks of this Abby are wont to enter into the Church by the Gate of the Cloister which is near the Choir; but for the more State, and to make a greater show of their Abbot in all his Pomp and Majesty, they chose this time to come out of the Monastery, and to take a Round,

Round, in order to their Entring the Church by the great Gate, at the West-end of it. As soon as they entred, the Bells, Organs, and other Musical Instruments sounded a March; and as for the Monks, they gave forth such an Air in their going, as discover'd rather the Vanity of their Hearts, than that Majesty which becomes the Ministers at the Altar.

When they were come into the Church, the Abbot made a halt before the Chappel of *S. Bernard*, which is at the lower end of the Church, and kneeled down upon Cushions of Violet-colour'd Velvet, very richly Embroidered, which were laid upon a Desk, cover'd with a Carpet of the same, garnished with a rich golden Fringe. And at the same time the Musicians sung an Anthem in praise of that Saint. After this the Abbot was conducted to his Throne, which they had erected at the right side of the Altar. It was cover'd on high with a magnificent Canopy of State, and surrounded with several Seats, very richly adorn'd, for all the Officers that were to officiate at the *Pontifical*. Being arrived here, he seated himself, having two Abbots of his Friends on each side of him; and immediately fourteen of his Monks, in their Surplices, went and took the Ornaments that were laid on Tables placed near the High Altar, wherewith he was to be invested; and having each of them taken what belong'd to their place, they rang'd themselves one behind another, making a long Row. The first of them carried in a large Silver gilt-Charger the *Abbatical Buskins*; the

the ſecond, in another like Charger, the *Abbatical Shoes* of Violet colour'd Velvet richly Embroider'd; a third carried the *Coif*; a fourth the *Rochet*; which, as alſo the *Coif*, was of moſt fine Linnen, lac'd round about, and at the Hands, with a very curious *Point de Venice* of a Foot deep; the fifth follow'd with a very coſtly *Girdle* of white Silk woven and wrought to admiration; the ſixth carried the *Stole*; the ſeventh and eighth, each of them a *Tunicle* of white Taffety; the ninth had the *Cap*, which like the *Stole* was of Cloth of Gold, the Edges of it being rais'd by Embroidery into ſeveral curious Figures, compos'd of Seed-Pearl, and furniſh'd with golden Claſps; the tenth carried the *Little Croſs of Diamonds*, valued at Two thouſand Crowns; the eleventh, in a great Charger gilt and enamel'd, carried the *Abbatical Gloves*; and the twelfth the *Abbatical Ring*, being an *Amethiſt* of an extraordinary ſize; the thirteenth follow'd with the *Mitre*, thick ſet with Pearls and precious Stones; and the fourteenth and laſt carried the *Croſier* or *Paſtoral Staff*. Every one of theſe in order, as they drew near to the Abbot (ſeated on his Throne) bowed the Knee before him; and after they had deliver'd their ſeveral Charges into the hand of the Aſſiſtant Abbots, who were to Attire their Prelate, having firſt worſhip'd him with another Genuflexion, retir'd again in good order. At every Ornament that was put upon him, there were particular Prayers which the Aſſiſting Abbots repeated, and the Officiating Prelat read himſelf in the Pontifical Book,

Book, which was ſupported by two *Monks*; and two others, in their Surplices and Tunicles, held Wax-Candles to light him, whilſt the Maſter of Ceremonies turn'd the Leaves for him.

The Abbot being Accoutred with all theſe Ornaments, and having the Mitre on his Head, ſeated himſelf on his Throne in the midſt of the Two Abbots Aſſiſtants; and immediately all the Officers, who were to Officiate at the Ceremony, ranged themſelves near to him. Theſe Officers were four Chaunters in their *Rochets* and *Hoods*, four Sub-Chaunters in their *Surplices*, two Deacons in their *Stoles* and *Tunicles*, two Sub-Deacons in their *Tunicles*, two Taper-Bearers to hold the *Candleſticks*, and two Incenſe-Bearers, dreſt in *Surplices* and their *ſilver Cenſers* in their Hands; beſides another Officer to hold the *Croſier-Staff*, and the Maſter of Ceremonies with his *Rod* or *Wand*. All theſe were only to Officiate till about the middle of Even-ſong; at which time, as if they had been extreamly tired with the Attendance they had given, they were relieved by others yet more gorgeouſly Apparel'd, who were to Officiate till the Service was ended. Their Muſick was very numerous and choice: The Abbot ſung the firſt Verſe of Even-ſong, which was continued by the Muſick and Sing-men with abundance of Ceremonies, which I ſhall not inſiſt upon at preſent, that which I have already deliver'd being ſufficient to give you an Idea of that extraordinary Majeſty and External Pomp, wherewith Feaſts are ſolemnized in the Churches of *Italy*. For in caſe it be a

Biſhop,

Biſhop or Archbiſhop that Officiates, the Magnificence is much greater; and if it be a Cardinal or Pope that celebrates the Feaſt, theſe Ceremonies are carried to the higheſt point of Elevation and Grandeur imaginable.

I remember to have read ſomewhere in an *Engliſh* Proteſtant Author, the Commendations and Elogies he beſtows upon thoſe of the Roman Communion, in this Point of Ceremonies, ſaying, *That in this only they are Praiſe-worthy and to be commended, that they ſpare nothing that may contribute to the Coſtlineſs and Solemnity of their Feaſts.* For my part, I have very induſtriouſly apply'd my ſelf to ſearch out the Principle form whence ſo much falſe Luſtre doth proceed, which they make uſe of in the Church of *Rome* to dazle the Eyes of the Inconſiderate and Unthinking People; and I have found that it is not their great Zeal for the Houſe of God that is the Motive of it, but only Intereſt, Vainglory and Self-love, as I abundantly diſcover'd upon this Occaſion.

The Even-ſong ended about ſix of the Clock in the Evening; after which the Abbot and his Officers, having put off their Ornaments, went into the *Sextry*, where they found great Tables cover'd and thick ſet with dry and wet Confects, Neats-Tongues, *Bononia* Sauſages, and fine Paſtry-meat. All the Ladies and Gentlemen of Quality that were in the Church, were deſired to enter; and as for my ſelf, having a free acceſs to that Abby, as being in a manner one of the Family; becauſe I publickly taught there the Liberal Arts, and had

had a good Allowance, besides the Abbots Table; I entred into the *Sextry* with them, and had moreover the Priviledge of bringing some Frenchmen of my Acquaintance in with me, which are now in *London*. The Gentlemen and Ladies were not wanting to bestow great *Encomiums* on the Abbot, each declaring how admirable well his Pontifical Habit did become him, and how gracefully he did Officiate. In the mean time the Monks apply'd themselves to the Ladies of their Acquaintance, and entred into close Discourse with them, but what it was, I could not be witness to; only thus much I can aver, That their Beauty had so far charm'd them, that for a whole Month after it was the great Subject of their Discourse. It seems they had so well studied them, during the Converse they had with them, that they could give an exact account of the Cloaths, Ribands, and Laces they had on.

The Abbot (during the Entertainment) addrest himself to two Ladies of Quality, the one a Lady Marquess, and the other a Countess; and demanded of them, Whether they had not found a desire stirring in them, to persuade some of their Children to become Religious of his Order? The Lady Marquess answer'd, *She would consider of it.* But the Countess very frankly assur'd him, *That she had been so extreamly satisfied with the Pontifical, which had been celebrated with so much Pomp and Majesty, that it had even ravish'd her; and that she was absolutely resol-v'd, her Son should take the Habit of the Order.* She told the Abbot, *That*

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the Jeſuits *did their utmoſt Endeavours, to draw him over to them; but that ſhe would be ſure to break all their Meaſures, and hop'd that her Son would behave himſelf ſo well in the Monaſtery, that one day ſhe might have the Joy and Comfort to ſee him made Abbot of the Order, and Pontifically Officiating.*

All our good natur'd Monks, in the mean time, notwithſtanding all the pains they had taken in aſſiſting at the Church-Ceremonies, were very ready to wait upon the fair Ladies at Table, and to keep them Company, as being in this regard a Thouſand-fold more happy than other *Italian* Laymen, who have not the priviledge of making Feaſts to get a ſight of their Ladies, and who can ſcarcely ever meet with an opportunity of rendring them the like Services. I cannot deny, but that ſome of theſe Ladies were of Kin to them; but however, it muſt needs be a great ſatisfaction to have an occaſion of Treating them ſo ſplendidly out of the publick Stock of the Abby, which cannot be done, but in thoſe ſorts of Ceremonies: For at any time, if they deſire to do it, it muſt coſt them a round ſum of mony. The Ladies, in the mean while, were in ſo a good Humor, and ſo extraordinarily well pleas'd, as well with their Entertainment in the Church, as in the *Sextry*, that they very freely ask'd the Abbot, When they might expect to come to another *Pontifical*? Who promis'd them to celebrate another on the Day of S. *Francis* of *Rome*.

It is impoſſible, Sir, you ſhould not take notice in all this I have related to you concerning the Solemnity of this Feaſt, what indeed were the true motives of it. The Abbot hereby pleaſed his Vainglorious humor, by appearing in a Pontifical Dreſs, with ſo many pompous Ornaments, amidſt ſo many Adorations and ſo many Incenſings as were preſented to him. Beſides this, he made alſo his advantage of it; for from hence he took occaſion to ſollicit Perſons of Quality, after he had dazled their Eyes with the magnificent ſplendor of his Pontifical, to perſuade their Children to take the Habit of the Order. I know very well how gainful it is to the Abbot and other principal Officers of the Abby, when the Children of Perſons of Quality take upon them the Habit. They never admit them to the Profeſſion, till their Parents have preſented them very liberally, beſides the Annual Penſion they are bound to allow their Son; and the more honourable the perſons are, the more conſiderable ſtill are the Preſents that are made them. The reſt of the Religious find their pleaſure and ſatisfaction in theſe Feſtivals; their Eyes are feaſted with the ſumptuous adorning of their Churches, and their Ears with the ſweetneſs of the moſt choice and exquiſit Muſick; neither is the Feaſt that concludes the Solemnity, and the Ladies company, the leaſt Charm to make them deſirable: So that, in a word, the Glory of God, and the Zeal of his Holy Temple, are at the beſt, and to ſpeak moſt favourably, but the more remote Object of theſe pompous Solemnities.

I have already told you in one of my LETTERS, that I fear'd to pass for a severe Censor in your Judgment, who takes pleasure to put a rigorous Sense upon Actions, otherwise capable of a favourable Interpretation; and for this Reason I always back what I say with the Reasons that induce me to pass these sorts of Judgments; and I question not in the least, but that if you will be pleas'd well to weigh them, you'l find that I have us'd abundance of Moderation in my Expressions. To apply this therefore to the present Subject, I shall proceed to tell you, that the Festival of S. *Francis* of *Rome* approaching, on which Day the Abbot had promis'd the Ladies another *Pontifical*, preparations were made for greater pomp and splendor, than before had been at the Feast of S. *Bernard*. They had sent for Musicians from *Florence* and *Venice*, who two days before the Feast were arrived at the Abby, where they were very splendidly entertain'd. The Evening before the Abbot and the Monks pray'd heartily for fair Weather; and the Air being at that time very clear and serene, there was all the appearance imaginable that it would continue so; which Hopes fill'd them with unutterable Joys. There was only one good old Convert Fryer amongst them, who being better inform'd than all this, by the Twitches his Corns gave him, very peremptorily aver'd, It would rain the next day. Upon this ominous Intimation, the Abbot himself went out after Supper, to Star-gaze what Weather they were like to have the next day; and seeing the Sky so very clear and

and full of Stars, declar'd there was no need to fear, but they should have a fair day on't, and that the old Fryer was a *Turba Festa*, a meet *Trouble-Feast* to talk so at random. Upon this assurance the Monks retir'd to their Apartments that Evening with a great deal of Joy. But forasmuch as it is not for men to know the Times and Seasons, which God has reserv'd in his own power, about midnight the Weather changed, and the next morning there fell so furious a shower, that it was impossible to stir abroad without being wet to the Skin. This Tempestous Weather continu'd till Night, which seiz'd the Spirits of the poor Monks with a strange Consternation. The next morning they appear'd all Pail-fac'd, and gave evident proof, how great a change crost Desires are able to produce in the Body of man. Some of them openly murmur'd against Heaven, because that almost every Year it disturbed or disappointed their Feast of S. *Francis*; others of them retain'd still some hope that the Rain might hold up within few Hours; but alas! their Hopes were all in vain; the Heavens were too resolv'd, and the Storm was so far from ceasing or diminishing, that it increas'd more and more. The Abbot perceiving there was no Remedy, sent word to the Sexton to shut up the Ornaments of the *Pontifical*; however, he order'd the Musick should play, because the Musicians were present, and that most of them were paid before-hand; but he forbad the great Rows of Wax-Candles to be lighted, which had been disposed of round the Church, or to burn

the Incenſe that had been prepared for the Altars: So that, excepting only the Muſick, the Office was very ſimply and plainly celebrated after the ordinary manner. The Abbot did not appear at it himſelf, and all this great pomp and ſolemnity vaniſh'd in ſmoak.

Now I deſire you, Sir, only to draw a rational and obvious Conſequence from all theſe proceedings. Can you perſuade your ſelf, that God or the Saint were the Object or Motive of all this ado? God is Immenſe and Infinite, every where preſent, whether it be fair or foul; and the Saint alſo is ſuppos'd to be always the ſame in Heaven: How came it to paſs then, that the Solemnity was chang'd, and put off; but becauſe the Gentlemen and Ladies that had been invited, and for whoſe ſake the Feaſt was intended, could not come? *Sublatâ cauſâ tollitur effectus*; *Take away the Cauſe, and the Effect ceaſeth.* Or can we draw a more juſt Conſequence, or more proper to ſtop the mouths of our Adverſaries of the *Romiſh Communion*, who object to us their Divine Service, as celebrated with ſo much pomp and magnificence, and who find ſo much fault with the ſimplicity and modeſty of ours? When they celebrate their *Mattins*, or *Morning Service*, of their greateſt Holidays before Day-light, they ſcarcely Light Two Wax-Candles on the Altar, (*Becauſe*, ſay they, *no body frequents them*); whereas in the day time, when there is abundance of Company, they light a matter of Three or four hundred. May we not therefore with great Reaſon reproach them,

That

That all their pompous Feasts and Solemnities are only to satisfie their own Pleasure, Vain-glory and Avarice? And that therefore God abhors and abominates these their Services; so far are they from being any proof of the Truth of their Religion. In the mean time I must needs acknowledge, That this is that which deludes many, and is a Stone of Offence to all those, who in Matters of Religious Worship consider only that which strikes the Senses.

I knew a Papist in *England*, that was turn'd Protestant many years before, who told me he was returning again to *Italy*, in order to joyn himself again to the *Romish Communion*; and his Reason was, *Because forsooth the Divine Service was not solemniz'd here with that solemnity as it was in his Country.* I wonder, why by the dint of the same Argument he was not perswaded to turn *Jew*, who use yet more Ceremonies than the Church of *Rome*; or rather, I am astonish'd he did not consider with himself, That all these Ceremonies and pompous Vanities being only arbitrary things, which depend only on the Will of Men, if the Protestants were inclin'd that way, might contrive and institute such as should be more magnificent than those of *Rome*, and might make their Bishops to appear every day in as pompous Ornaments as the Pope does on S. *Peter's* day: And if they don't do it, the Reason is, *Because they are well perswaded, that what is most pleasing in the Eyes of Men, is not always most acceptable to God, who requires pure and holy Hearts, and not rich and*

pompous Apparel, and to whom the fervency of our prayers is far more acceptable than clouds of the sweetest Incense. Besides, the Service and Worship of God, as it is celebrated in their Churches, is not altogether destitute of decent Ornaments neither: The Ministers Habit is such as distinguisheth them from all others in their Ministry, but yet so, as without any thing of Superstition: There is no Divine Virtue attributed to them, that renders the Wearers thereof more holy than others; whereas, in the Church of *Rome*, should a Priest celebrate Mass without his Hood, or *Amict*, and that wilfully, they hold it to be a mortal sin.

I return now to our Feasts again, and having given you an account how the same are celebrated by those Monks who live upon their Incoms; I shall proceed now to those of other Religious, who partly live of Incoms and partly of Alms, who are as of those who live altogether of Alms, as well known in *Italy* by the Name of *Frati*. During my stay at *Rome*, I went to the *Minerva*, which is a famous Convent of the *Dominicans*; it was on a *Saturday*, at which time they were celebrating a Festival in Honour of the *Rosary* of the *Blessed Virgin*. I learnt, That the Heads of that Confraternity met every *Saturday*, and did every one of them by turns celebrate the Feast of the *Rosary* at their own Charges. 'Tis the Humor of the *Italians*, in such like Cases, to strive for the Honour of surpassing one another, and spare no Cost, to the end they may in magnificence outvy others;

others; This is an Emulation that is natural to them, and which I believe cannot with good ground be attributed to their Vertue, because herein they feed their Vanity as much as in those sumptuous *Cavalcades* they make, and in which (after the same manner) their great aim is to outdo one another.

These Religious, or *Frati*, have contrived a Form of Feasts for their own Tooth: The Monks (as was said before) make them at their own Charges, and to set forth their Riches and Glory; but these always celebrate them upon other mens Purses, and with such Caution, as withal to fill their own into the bargain. The Laws they have establish'd to this purpose, are, That whosoever causeth a Feast to be solemniz'd, must send beforehand a sufficient Sum of Mony, to defray all the Masses that the Religious of the Convent do celebrate that day: In the second place, he must be at all the Charge of Adorning the Chappel, or Church, where the Feast is to be kept; and in the third place, he is oblig'd to send in a splendid Dinner for all the good Fryers of the Convent. Some amongst them, for this very Reason, do very aptly call these Feasts, *The Fryers Milch-Cows*. As for those Fryers which are call'd *Mendicants*, such as the *Capuchins*, and some others, who live wholly of Alms; forasmuch as they cannot, by reason of their Vow of *Poverty* in Common, receive any Mony for their *Masses*, there is this difference, that instead of delivering the Mony for that purpose into their own Hands, it is to be paid

to him whom they call their Temporal Father, that is a Layman, who has the diſpoſal of their mony for their uſe, and whom they call every Month to an account, even to the utmoſt farthing. Their Patriarch, S. *Francis*, never dreamt of this piece of ſubtilty, and conſequently alſo he has not made the leaſt mention of it in his Rule, or Directory; but as for theſe good Fathers, they have quite outdone him in refined Wit and Invention. They do not think it convenient, ſo wholly to rely upon the Divine Providence, as not to think their own the more ſafe and ſure way. *What would you have us do?* (ſay they) *alas! the Times are changed, and Laymen are not ſo charitable now, as they were in the time of S.* Francis! For my part, I durſt undertake to prove to their Faces, That in caſe they liv'd with as much frugality as their Ancient Fathers (who, to ſpeak truth, are of no great Antiquity neither) they would find Superſtitious People enough, to furniſh them with a ſufficiency, for a ſober and penitential Diet. But who would take delight to incommodate themſelves, to cram a company of lazy Lubbers, who do nothing but go about from Houſe to Houſe to fill their Bellies, eſpecially leading ſo ſcandalous a Life as they do? True it is, that by their cunning they have ſo order'd the matter, that they want for nothing; and one of the beſt Inventions they have ever yet found out, to be ſumptuouſly and delicately treated, is their Feaſts.

And

And forasmuch as a Regular Feast, I mean those that are mark'd in the Almanack, are only to be found once in the Year, they have invented the useful Contrivance of *Confraternities*, as being most fruitful Nurseries of Feasts or Holidays for them, so as even to produce many for them in one and the same Week. A *Confraternity*, according to the definition they give us of it, is an Association of many persons, who unite themselves and agree together, at certain Times, to render some Religious Worship to God, to the Virgin, or to some other Saint, in such a manner as is not common to all: But at the bottom, it is indeed nothing else, but the most sure and refined Art the Church of *Rome* has to catch mony; and they have always some good crafty Father or other, that has the Trade of drawing-in people at his fingers-end, who is the Director of it: 'Tis to him all those that desire to be admitted to the *Confraternity* must addresse themselves, where (for writing down his Name in the Book, and for Entrance-mony) it costs him a Crown at least; and every Year at the same day, he must come to have his Name renewed, and pay over the same Entrance-mony, as at his first Admittance, otherwise you are without Mercy most ignominiously expell'd the *Confraternity*, and from that time forwards are excluded from having any share in their *Prayers*, or partaking of their *Indulgences*. Over and above all this, there is some Mony to be paid every Month, towards the Lights of the Chappel where the *Confraternity* is erected; which, considering the vast Number of

thoſe who are inroll'd in it, produceth a prodigious Sum of mony.

The leaſt *Confraternities* that are, conſiſt of Three or four hundred perſons; there are ſome have a thouſand, yea, Two or three thouſand belonging to them. I have my ſelf ſeen above Twenty thouſand Names enroll'd in the Book of the Confraternity of the *Scapulary* of the *Carmelites* of *Milan*; and in that of the great Confraternity of the *Roſary* of S. *John*, and S. *Paul* of *Venice*, I have been certainly inform'd there are above Forty thouſand Brothers: Suppoſe every one of the Brethren ſhould only give a Peny every Month towards the Chappel-Lights, it would be impoſſible to burn all the Wax-Candles that mony would buy; which by conſequence turns to the profit of theſe good Fryers. They are continually hankering about the richeſt perſons of their *Confraternity*, endeavouring to perſuade them to make Feaſts in Honour of the he or ſhe Saint, in whoſe Name their *Confraternity* is erected.

I hapned once to be in Company of an *Italian* Count, who was of the *Confraternity* of the *Little Scapulary* of the Virgin, erected in the Great Convent of the *Carmelites* at *Rome*, at the time when the Father Director of the *Confraternity* came in to him, and told him with a ſmiling Countenance, *Conte Giovanni, I have a great Complaint againſt you, from one of your very good ſhe Friends.* The Count ſuppoſing it to be from one of his Miſtreſſes, ask'd him, Who it was?

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The Director answer'd, *That it was from the* Blessed Virgin, *and that he had no reason to doubt, but that she was very angry with him, for having for so long a time neglected, to cause the Feast of the* Holy Scapulary *to be celebrated.* The Count excused himself upon the account of some extraordinary Business, that had put him by his Thoughts that way; and desired the Director to send him in next Week the List of their Religious. When he was departed, the Count told me, That what he had told him imply'd as much, as that he would make the Feast of the *Scapulary* the next Week; because on the like occasion it is customary to send in as many couples of Capons and Bottles of Wine, as there be Religious in the Convent, besides mony to pay for the Masses that are to be said that day; so that his demanding a List of the Director, was a full Intimation that he had granted his Suit; and accordingly he took his leave very well satisfied, saying, *He would take care to pacifie his she Friend.* The Count told me afterwards, That this Feast would cost him a round Sum, because commonly the Note of the Director of the *Confraternity* mounted very high, as well for the Lights, as for the Musicians and Adorners of the Church.

And in order to the multiplication of these Feasts, they have pitch'd upon one day of the Week, for the assembling or meeting together of their *Confraternities*; that of the *Rosary* meets every *Saturday*; of the *Little Scapulary* on *Thursdays*, as likewise that of the *Holy Sacrament*; the Con-

Confraternity of S. *Francis* his *Cord* on *Fridays*; that of the *Annunciation* on *Wedneſdays*; that of S. *Antonio* on the *Tueſdays*; and laſtly, the *Mondays* are peculiarly appropriated to the Confraternities of the *Souls in Purgatory*. So that you ſee, they are fairly provided with Feaſts for every day of the Week, and that without counting ſeveral other particular *Confraternities*, the Number whereof is unknown to me, theſe which I have mentioned being only the more general. They are not indeed all of them to be met with in one Church, nor in one and the ſame Order of Religious; for the *Roſary* belongs to the *Dominicans*; the *Little Scapulary* to the *Carmelites*; the Cord of S. *Francis* to the *Franciſcans*; the *Annunciation* to the *Soccolanti*; S. *Anthony* of *Padua* appertains in general to all the Religious that live under the Rule of S. *Francis*; and the *Souls in Purgatory* do not only belong to all the Religious Orders, but alſo to all Pariſhes and Churches under the inſpection of Secular Prieſts.

After all this, it cannot be deny'd but that thoſe of the *Roman Communion* are certainly fallen in love with their own Blindneſs, in that they will not ſo much as take the pains to open their Eyes, to ſee how miſerably theſe Fellows gull and cheat them: For what can be imagin'd more ridiculous, than all theſe ſorts of *Confraternities*? Becauſe S. *Francis* forſooth, wore a Cord or Rope inſtead of a Girdle, they have erected a *Confraternity* in Honour of it; accordingly every Brother of the Society muſt wear a ſmall Cord: Theſe ſmall Cords

or

or Bands, do not in the leaſt reſemble that which S. *Francis* wore, which I have ſeen at *Aſſize*, and is as thick as ſome of the greateſt Ropes that wind up Buckets in a Well; but theſe are very delicately wrought, and very artificially knotted in ſeveral places. The Cuſtom is, to bleſs them publickly, with many Ceremonies and Prayers; which being performed, they tell us, *They have the virtue to blot out all Venial ſins; to drive away the Devil, and troubleſom Temptations of the Fleſh.* Moſt of the Ladies of *Italy* wear this Cord of S. *Francis*; they tye them round about their Bodies, and the ends of them reach to the bottom of their Petty-coats; they are full of pretty little Knots, and they ſerve them to play withal, as the *Engliſh* Ladies do with their *Fans* or *Masks*. Were it true indeed, That theſe Cords had the power of repreſſing Carnal Temptations, the Ladies of *Italy*, who wear ſuch lovely ones, could not fail of being the chaſteſt Women in the World; and yet I am ſure, this is not the Commendation that is given them. But be it as it will, this *Cord* is a thing ſo extraordinary Holy, that great Feaſts are celebrated in Honour of it every Week in all the Churches belonging to the *Franciſcans*; and the Popes have been pleas'd to beſtow great Indulgences to all thoſe, who ſhall Enroll themſelves in this Society of the *Cord*. They are only the poor Proteſtants that do not enjoy all theſe fair Advantages, becauſe they look upon them as no better than meer folly; and for my part, I believe they have very good reaſon for being of this Opinion;

Opinion; and that the ſureſt and ſafeſt way is, to believe with them, That the only thing that can make us of proof againſt all Temptations, and endue us with the power to overcome ſin, is the *Grace of God*, and that by means of it alone, we ſhall become Conquerors over the *Devil*, the *Fleſh*, and the *World*, without the aſſiſtance of either *Rope* or *Cord*.

The Confraternity of the *Roſary* is no leſs ſuperſtitiouſly founded than the fore-going. Since the *Salutation* of the Angel *Gabriel* to the *Virgin*, has paſt in the Church of *Rome* for the moſt Holy Prayer that can be made to her, the Father *Dominicans*, who pretend to be the greateſt Favourites of the *Holy Virgin*, to the end they might have ſome particular Devotion to diſtinguiſh them from the Common, have invented that which is now called *The Roſary*, which is nothing elſe but an aggregation of ſeveral *Ave Maries*; there are Tentimes ten of them in the *Roſary*, and at the end of each Ten they add the *Lord's Prayer*. And to the end they may not fail of ſaying the juſt Number (for in caſe one only *Ave-Mary* ſhould chance to be omitted, it would be the loſs of the whole Indulgence) they have brought into uſe their *Paternoſters*, or *Beads*, by which they count the Prayers as they ſay them, that there may be no miſtake. And as it is the Belief of the Church of *Rome*, That the Elements and material Subjects of the Sacraments, are not only Signs, but Phyſical Inſtrumental Cauſes, producing Grace in the Soul: For they ſay, That the *Water* in Baptiſm, the *Oyl* in the

the Extream Unction, and the Matter preſented in the Collation of Orders, do phyſically produce Grace in the Soul; ſo in like manner the Popes have affixed to theſe *Beads* of Wood, Glaſs, or any other matter, the Graces and Priviledges that belong to the *Roſary*: So that if a perſon ſhould Repeat all the Prayers ordered and eſtabliſhed for the *Roſary*, without having one of theſe *Pater-noſters*; yea, tho' (to be exact in his Tale) he ſhould count them on his *Buttons* or *Fingers*, yet would he not thereby obtain the Indulgence: No, by no means, there muſt be *Pater-noſters* in the caſe, as being the Inſtrumental Cauſes of producing Grace in the Soul. There are ſcarcely any *Italians* but have theſe *Pater-noſters* about them, either in their Pockets, or hanging about their Necks, between their Shirts and their Doublets. The Ladies carry them on their Arms, and they have nowadays made an Ornamental Bravery of it, not inferiour to their *Necklaces* and *Bracelets* of Pearls and Diamonds. They ſometimes go abroad without either *Fan* or *Mask*, but never without their *Beads*. The moſt common, for Women of a mean Condition, are of *Coral* or *Amber*; but the Ladies of Quality have them of *Precious Stones*, or of *Odoriferous Paſts*, adorn'd with the moſt curious *Ribands*, and garniſhed with abundance of *Gold* and *Silver Medals*. The greateſt Proſtitutes would be aſham'd to go abroad without their Great *Pater-noſters* on their Arms, which hang down to their Feet; not that their Devotion is ſo great in Running of them over, but meerly becauſe it is cuſtomary,

mary, and a kind of neceſſary Implement for them to trifle with, which they cannot well be without: Neither do they make any difficulty to ask of their Lovers a *Paternoſter* for the price of their infamous Commerce.

The *Little Scapulary*, or *Habit of the Virgin*, is a piece of the ſame worth and value, and belongs to the *Carmelites*; for it is their own Habit to which they make people pay ſo great Reſpect, and ſo many Adorations. Theſe Fathers were originally *Hermits*, who had their place of Retirement on *Carmel*. They pretend, That the *Bleſſed Virgin* appeared to them there, and gave them the Form of the Habit they were to wear, which is a *Veſt*, and a *Scapulary* of a brown Colour, and a great *white Hood*; and that ſhe told them at the ſame time, *That all thoſe who ſhould wear that Habit ſhould be bleſſed by Her, and Her Son* Jeſus Chriſt, *and ſhould never die in any Mortal Sin.* Now foraſmuch as it is not poſſible to perſuade all the World to become *Carmelites*, that ſo they might enjoy the priviledges of this miraculous Habit, they have found out a way to cut their old Habits into little ſquare pieces of the bigneſs of four or five fingers breadth, which they (for their mony) beſtow upon Laymen, to wear about them. They have perſons on purpoſe ſtanding at the doors of their Churches, who ſell them for Four-pence or five-pence apiece. Certainly, this is the beſt improvement of old Cloaths that ever was thought of; and the moſt excellent Invention never to want new ones, and to be always well clad, that could

could poſſibly be imagin'd. And indeed, I ſcarcely remember ever to have ſeen any *Carmelites*, that were not very well Accouter'd, and that with new Cloaths too. True it is, there are ſome of thoſe to be ſold, that are very curiouſly wrought over with ſilk, for thoſe, who not contenting themſelves with theſe fooliſh Devotions, muſt needs have them ſet forth with abundance of Vanity; but however, the Ground of them muſt always be a ſhred of a *Carmelites* old Frock. They have inſtituted ſeveral *Confraternities* in Honour of this Holy Habit; they celebrate great Feaſts every Week, with moſt exquiſit Muſick, and have particular Maſſes ſaid in Reverence and Reſpect to this Habit. As for this *Little Scapulary*, as well as the *Roſary*, S. *Francis*'s Cord, the bleſt *Paſts* and *Medals* of our Lady of *Loretto*, 'tis ſtill one and the ſame Song; it, as all the reſt, forgives *Venial ſins*, prevents ones dying in *Mortal ſin*, and procures a ſpeedy Deliverance from the *Flames of Purgatory*. I deſire you, Sir, to repreſent to your ſelf a poor *Roman Catholick* with all this Gear and Harneſs about him, one of the *Little Scapularies* on his Back, S. *Francis* his *Rope* about his Waſte, a *Roſary*, or great *Paternoſter* in his Hand; abundance of *Medals* and *Bleſt Paſts*, *Images*, *Written Prayers*, and *Saints Bones*, about his Neck, upon his Breaſt, or in his Pockets, who is Cock-ſure, that by means of theſe he ſhall not only eſcape Hell, but alſo the ſcorching *Flames of Purgatory*. What think you? Have we not all the reaſon of the World, to write above his Head in great Characters, *Error & Superſtitio*?

On the other hand, ſet before your Eyes a Good *Proteſtant*, who neglecting all theſe things, wholly applies himſelf to Live well, placing all his Hope and Confidence in God alone, and the Merits of his Saviour Jeſus Chriſt; and then tell me ſincerely, and without byaſs, which of both has more Reaſon of his ſide, and better ground for what he does. And yet this Error and Superſtition is ſo deeply rooted in the minds of the *Papiſts*, that there is ſcarcely any way left to diſabuſe and unhoodwink them, ſo fatally have their *Prieſts* and *Monks* enchanted them.

I knew in *Germany*, a German Captain, who had no great Faith in all theſe *Confraternities* and *Contrived Devotions*; I tabled at his Houſe in the City of *Mentz*; whenever there hapned to be any Diſcourſe concerning them, he always diſcover'd his Averſion to them, and declar'd with abundance of reaſon, That they were only the effects of Prieſt and Monk-Craft to get Mony; and that he believed, God would moſt ſeverely puniſh them for it in the other World, as well as thoſe who ſuffer'd themſelves to be abus'd by ſuch Follies. This Captain ſome time after fell into a Conſumption, and about three or four hours before his Death, I was with him in his Chamber, and foraſmuch as he had ſtill the free uſe of his Senſes and Speech, he diſcourſed concerning the Things of Eternal Life; and (as a good Father) exhorted his Children, which ſtood about his Bed, to an honeſt and truly Chriſtian Life. Whilſt he was thus employ'd, in comes a Father *Dominican*, who had

had been sent for by the Mistress of the House: He was the Director of the Confraternity of the *Rosary*, with a great *Pater-Noster* in his Hand, and drawing near to the Dying man, he exhorted him to Enroll himself in the *Confraternity* before his Death. The sick man desired him not to interrupt the Exhortation he was giving to his Children, which might be of far more profit to them than his *Rosary*; the words of a dying Father to his Children remaining commonly impresst on their Minds as long as they live. The *Dominican* giving little heed to all this, obstinately prosecuted his Design, repeating continually to him, *That should he come to die without Enrolling his Name in the* Confraternity, *he would lie a tedious while in Purgatory, and that there he would have time enough, and to spare, to repent him at leisure.* The sick man told him, *If you believe it to be so good and saving a thing for my soul, why don't you then set down my Name of your own accord?* But the Father not finding his Account in this, continued to fright and terrifie the Patient; who at last being scar'd by the horrid Representations he had made him, Cry'd out to his Wife, *Pray give him a Crown, and let him write down my Name.* Whereupon the Father, after he had given him a *Paternoster*, went his way, and as he was going out of Doors, told his Wife, *That in case he had not happily come to her Husband, he would have lied like a Dog.* The good Father having obtain'd his end, came no more to look after him; and this poor Gentleman died about three or four hours after,

with his great *Bead-row* about his Neck. I confeſs, I ſhould have been extreamly ſurpriz'd to ſee, that a Man, who had all his life time witneſſed ſo great an averſion for theſe foppiſh Superſtitions, ſhould himſelf at laſt fall under them a little before his Death; I ſay, I ſhould have been very much aſtoniſh'd at it, had I not my ſelf heard the frightful Diſcourſe wherewith the *Dominican* entertain'd him, taking occaſion from his weak and dying condition, to impreſs in his Mind all the pannick Terrours of *Hell* and *Purgatory*; for he talk'd at ſuch a dreadful rate to him, as if it were impoſſible for him (without giving his conſent to be admitted of the *Confraternity*, with a *Crown* at the Tail of it) to be ever ſaved, but would be ſure to be damn'd with all the Devils in Hell to all Eternity.

See here, Sir, the goodly uſe is made of theſe *Confraternities*, and what all theſe affected and contrived Devotions of the Papiſts do end in. I am now enter'd into ſo large a Field, and I have ſo many true Stories to produce on this Subject, that I ſhould never make an end, ſhould I once begin with them; and am therefore oblig'd, to the end this LETTER may not ſwell too big, to paſs them by in ſilence. Nevertheleſs, I think I cannot in reaſon exempt my ſelf from giving you a word of Information more, concerning the Society of the Souls in *Purgatory*. This is the moſt general of them all, as belonging to all Churches, and to all Prieſts, as well Secular as Regular; This is their true Nurſing Mother; for in *Italy* the Dead (which is ſtrange) maintain the Living,

and the Prieſts and the Monks are the Ravens and Crows, that fatten and cram themſelves with the Karkaſſes of the Dead. This is that probably which inſpires them with that inhuman Cruelty and Barbarity, that makes them deſire the Death of all Men.

I ſhall not ſpend any time here to oppoſe the falſe Opinion of *Purgatory*, becauſe being a Point of Doctrin, it is no part of the Task I have undertaken; but ſhall only acquaint you with the uſe is made of it in the Church of *Rome*; and how dexterouſly the Prieſts and Monks have turn'd it to their great Gain and Advantage. I cannot but own, that a perſon who is perſuaded of the Exiſtence of a *Purgatory*, and that ſo dreadful an one as the *Roman Catholicks* repreſent to us, cannot but apprehend it his Intereſt to think ſeriouſly of it; and according to this Perſuaſion, I do not think it ſtrange, if a Papiſt in his laſt Will appropriates ſome conſiderable part of his Eſtate for Prayers and Maſſes to be ſaid for the Relief of his Soul after Death, or even his beſtowing ſomething by way of Charity, to have them ſaid for others alſo; but when this is done with Indiſcretion and Exceſs, and to the great prejudice of ones Neighbour, this is a thing I can in no wiſe approve of. I know well, that in this Point I ſhall have all the Clergy of the Roman Communion againſt me; for they maintain, That in this caſe there can be no Indiſcretion or Exceſs committed, nor any prejudice or hurt done to any whatſoever; grounding themſelves on this Principle (which they extreamly

miſconſtrue,) *That a well-order'd Charity begins from a mans ſelf; Charitas bene ordinata incipit à ſeipſo.* So that conform to their Hypotheſis, a man that ſhould Diſinherit all his Children without any other Cauſe, but the deſire he has to beſtow all his Eſtate upon the Prieſts, that they may pray to God, and ſay Maſſes for his Soul after his Death, does them no injury at all; and that they would be ready to repreſent him as a man who did not conſult with Fleſh and Blood, in a Caſe where the good of his own Soul lay at ſtake, and was concerned.

I ſhall to this purpoſe relate to you a Matter of Fact, the remembrance only whereof doth ſtill afflict and grieve me, becauſe it prov'd the ruin of ſome perſons, whom I was particularly acquainted with. In a ſecond Journy I took to *Rome*, I took a Lodging in the Houſe of a very honeſt Widow, who was plentifully provided for, her Husband having left her a good Eſtate; and foraſmuch as ſhe had no Children, ſhe took two of her Sifters to live with her, and Entertain'd them very Charitably. The Father *Jeſuits*, who are far better acquainted with how many Widows there are in *Rome*, than how many Chapters there be in the Bible, had not forgot to ſet this good Woman on their Liſt; neither were they wanting in their diligence and application to Court her, in hopes to get her Eſtate. Her Confeſſor, who probably wanted to have her in the other World, order'd her (during the greateſt Heats of the Summer) to take a Journy to *Loretto*; which ſhe fail'd

not

not perform; but return'd very sick to *Rome*, where the Physicians soon despair'd of her Recovery; whereupon she made her last Will, whereby she left all her Estate to her two Sisters, except only Two hundred *Livers*, which she assign'd for Masses to be said for her after her decease. The Father *Jesuits* had soon notice of this, and without delay presented themselves before the Bed of their dying Votary; they forgot nothing which they conceiv'd might prevail with her to change her Testament. They represented to her, That it was the greatest folly imaginable to bestow ones Goods upon Relations, who commonly were very unthankful; That her chiefest Care ought to be, to procure her own Rest and Happiness in the other World; That she might be sure her Sisters would never be at a Farthing charge, to procure Prayers for her; yea, so far was it from that, that they had discover'd, That her Sisters foster'd a secret and mortal hatred against her, and that consequently (by a Trick of an *Italian* Revenge) they should be glad to leave her to swelter a good while in *Purgatory*. Last of all, they told her, That her Sisters were too far engag'd in a worldly Spirit, and would probably make a very ill use of the Estate she should leave them; and that to leave them any Mony would be no better than to trust a Knife in the hand of a Child, or Fool, who might hurt themselves therewith: And by this means, said they, she would give an occasion to her Sisters of offending God, and damning their own Souls, and consequently would become responsible

therefore before God: That her Sisters could work, and so might honestly gain their Livelyhood with the Labour of their Hands, which at the same time would secure them from Idleness, which is the Mother of all Vices. All these fair Reasons being utter'd with all the Artifice and Rhetorick imaginable, prevail'd with this poor Widow, whom a violent Fever, and the Pangs of approaching Death, made yet more apprehensive of the Pains of *Purgatory*; so that without any more ado she revok'd her Testament, and made but one Article of it, disposing all she had to the House of the Father *Jesuits* of *Rome*, that they might cause Prayers and Masses to be said for her. Thus she died in the midst of four *Jesuits*; and scarcely had they shut her Eyes, but they turn'd her Sisters out of Doors, and possest themselves of all that she had. These poor Gentlewomen, with tears in their Eyes, desired only that they would be pleas'd to give them some of their Sisters Cloaths; but the *Jesuits* utterly refus'd it, saying, *That they could not dispose of the least thing that belong'd to their Sister, for that all was to be turn'd into Mony to pray God for her Soul, who was now actually burning in the Flames of* Purgatory; *so that they could not in Conscience deprive her of the least Refreshment or Comfort, she had so wisely provided for her self.* Thus these poor afflicted young Women were fain to leave the House in a most desolate Condition; and I learnt since, that one of them died in an Hospital; and that the other (prest by want) had suffer'd her self to be debauch'd,

and

and at preſent led a lewd and ſcandalous Life in *Rome*.

What think you, Sir? Is not this an excellent uſe that is made of the Doctrin of *Purgatory* by theſe wretched and accurſed *Jeſuits*? I'le ſpend no more time in repreſenting to you the deformity and abominableneſs of the Fact, ſince the ſole recital of it evidenceth it as clear as the Sun.

Now, to bring this falſe Devotion the more in Requeſt, and to procure ways and means of multiplying it, they teach in *Italy*, That the Souls in *Purgatory* are not only ſuccour'd and reliev'd by the Prayers and Maſſes of the Prieſts, but that by the ſame means they become helps and aſſiſtants to others. If we will believe them, they aſſiſt perſons upon Earth in all their Concerns and Occaſions; if any one has a Suit at Law, or is engag'd in ſome troubleſom Buſineſs; or if a man be deſirous to obtain a Place, Command or Dignity, the ſureſt way (ſay they) in theſe caſes, is to have recourſe to theſe ſuffering Souls, and to get a number of Maſſes ſaid for them; for then by way of gratitude and acknowledgment, they take all Rubs out of ones way; they influence the Spirits of the Judges, and procure the Favour of Great Men. If a man be to go a Journy, there is nothing more common in *Italy*, than to ſend him away with this good Prayer or Wiſh; *Go, and may the* Bleſſed Virgin, *S.* Anthony *of* Padua, *and the Souls of* Purgatory *accompany you every where, and deliver you from all Dangers.* This is ſo univerſal that even the Boys that go to the *Jeſuits* School

are

are taught, That if they would riſe at the Set-hour in the Morning, they muſt recommend themſelves to the Souls in *Purgatory* over-night, before they go to ſleep. But pray, What appearance is there that thoſe poor Souls who cannot help themſelves, ſhould be in a condition to concern themſelves about, and help others? I have ſeen lewd Women impudently come into the *Sextry*, and to order a company of Maſſes to be ſaid for the Souls in *Purgatory*, to recover the good will of ſome of their Lovers, and to get more Practice; neither indeed are they ſo much to be blamed, for they are no better taught.

The power of the Souls in *Purgatory* is conceiv'd to be of that extent, and ſo general, as to believe that by this means they can obtain even unlawful things at the Hand of God. If it be demanded, Who they are that entertain the people in this groſs Ignorance? It is evident that they are no other but the Prieſts and Monks; and the Motive for which they do it, is purely their own Intereſt. They agree admirably well in the Doctrin of *Purgatory*; but in ſharing the Mony that is aſſign'd for the Prayers, they are all of them together by the Ears, and it is neither better nor worſe, than Catch that catch can.

A Noble *Venetian*, in a Company where I hapned to be preſent, gave a very pleaſant Relation of the ſport he had on this occaſion: He was left Executor of a Teſtament, and made the Guardian of a Pupil: The Lady who was dead, had bequeathed a Sum of Mony for Two thouſand Maſſes,

Maſſes to be ſaid for her. The Monks and Prieſts are very diligent to inform themſelves, by means of their Emiſſaries, when any Perſon of Quality dies, to the end they may prevent one another if they can, and get the Maſſes for themſelves. The *Jeſuits*, as being the moſt crafty of all, had firſt got the ſcent of it, and before any others, addreſt themſelves to the Noble *Venetian*; and as their Cuſtom is, they began to enlarge on the Subject of their own Praiſes, and averr'd, That there were no Religious in the Church of God, who did celebrate Maſſes with more Modeſty and Devotion than themſelves; and that the great Zeal they had for the ſpeedy Deliverance of the deceaſed Party, had induc'd them to come and deſire the diſcharging of the Two thouſand Maſſes left by her laſt Will. They ſaid, it was an open ſhame to ſee in what manner the other Religious and Secular Prieſts did diſpatch their Maſſes with ſo much hurry and precipitation, that a Maſs did not laſt above half a quarter of an hour, and that without doubt God was rather diſhonour'd, than honour'd by ſuch Services. The Noble *Venetian* having heard this fair Speech, told them, *He was glad to ſee the great Zeal they had for the ſoul of his Kinſwoman, tho' he was not ſo fully perſwaded of the Indevotion of all other Eccleſiaſticks, as they ſeem'd willing to repreſent them; that they might ſay Maſſes for the Dead as well as others; and that tho' he knew well, that it was not lawful for the* Jeſuits, *according to their Conſtitution, to receive the leaſt Mony for the Maſſes they ſaid; yet becauſe he would not*

ſeem

seem altogether to reject them, he would give them Mony for Fifty of them. The *Jesuits* being sorely vex'd, thus to be put by the Two thousand Masses they had already devour'd, retir'd themselves.

Soon after them the *Sacristans*, or *Sextons* of the Father *Dominicans*, were introduc'd; who represented, That they had in their Churches of *Castello*, and of S. *Giovanni* and *Paolo*, many Priviledg'd Altars (these are Altars to which the Popes have affixed so many *Indulgences*, that if one only Mass be said at them for any Soul in *Purgatory*, they are infallibly deliver'd thence) they alledg'd besides, That all the other Religious made no Bones of it, to sing one High Mass instead of many, and which they made to pass for an Hundred common Masses; but that, as for them, they scorn'd any such sinister ways, and promis'd fairly to say them all without the least abatement of the Tale; and that moreover, to testifie their superabundant Kindness to the deceased Party, they would over and above the Number cause several Masses to be sung for her on the grand Priviledg'd Altar in their Chappel of the Holy *Rosary*. The Noble *Venetian*, without taking any great notice of their Discourse, treated them no better than the *Jesuits*; and having granted them only some few Masses, sent them packing.

After them follow'd a great number of *Sextons* of other Religious Houses, and all for the Love of these Two thousand Masses. If a man might believe them, they were every one of them more Holy

Holy than their Brethren of other Orders; all others, according to them, were persons without Conscience, who devour'd the Mony assign'd to Masses, without performing the Obligations they took upon them. The *Venetian* however gave to every of them a pretty competent number of Masses, so that of the Two thousand he had only Five hundred left.

He sent in the Evening one of his Servants to the Place of S. *Mark*, to inform the *Secular Priests* (who commonly have their Walks there, to acquaint themselves where they may meet with Mony for their *Masses*.) That the next Morning his Master would be there, in order to distribute a number of *Masses*. According to his promise, the *Venetian* Nobleman repair'd thither with Five hundred Notes (this being the way of giving *Masses* in *Italy*, they give a Note, whereupon he that hath received, goes and says Mass, and enters it into the *Sexton's* Book, and then returns it to him who hath given it him, to receive his Mony) and went up to the *Procuracies* of S. *Mark*, which are the Buildings which surround the Place of S. *Mark*, and there pleas'd himself, throwing down these Notes amongst them from some of the Upper-windows. There were about Three or four hundred Priests below greedily waiting for them; who, as soon as they saw the Papers fly about, put themselves in a posture, to catch each of them the most they could; they push'd one another, they flung one another in the Dirt, they Beat one another, they pluck'd one another by the Hair,

and

and tore one anothers Bands and Cassocks, whilst a greater number of people look'd on, and laugh'd at them. There can be no better way of representing this Action, than by fancying to our selves a crowd of Common people, or rather of the Scum or Filth of the people, to whom some pieces of Mony are thrown out of the Windows, as I saw some Persons of Quality did on the Day of the Coronation of their Majesties King *William* and Queen *Mary*; for this was a perfect Representation of the Behaviour of the good Priests of the *Roman* Church on this Occasion. And seeing many in the Scuffle had dropt their Cloaks and Hats, some of their Companions, more dexterous than they, who chose rather to get a Cloak, or a Hat, than a Note, took them up, and having slily convey'd them under their own, skulk'd away with two Cloaks instead of one. The Notes being thus distributed, or rather Chance and Force having thus dispos'd of them, these good Priests departed each of them to their several Posts, to say their Masses.

Probably, Sir, you'l think very strange of this Relation of the Noble *Venetian*; yet I dare assure you, you need not question the belief of every part of it. The Priests and Monks do agree the best in the World, and are but as one, as long as their common Interest cements and keeps them together; but they are all at Daggers-drawing when the least particular Interest divides them: And as for those Priests who thrub'd one another in the Place of S. *Mark*, for to catch the Assignations to say Masses, that is no strange thing in *Italy*, I my

self

self have seen it with mine own Eyes above an hundred times: Alas! they do far worse than this, for even whilst they are in the *Sextry*, invested with their Sacerdotal Ornaments, they sometimes fight together for the Priority or Precedency in saying their Masses, and call one another the most infamous Names imaginable. The *Italians* in this also excuse them with a great deal of favourableness, or rather with too much Indulgence. *What would you have them do?* (say they) *they are a Company of poor Priests, that live of their Masses, and have nothing else to help themselves with; when that fails them, all fails them: And therefore they have great Reason to exert their utmost Activity for the obtaining of them.* However, I am not a little amaz'd, that the Bishops take no course to prevent these scandalous Disorders, and that they ordain so many Priests without providing them some Benefices. There is nothing more scandalous in a Clergy, than to see those who are the Members of it, to be reduc'd by a necessity of Subsistence, to base and mean Actions, and altogether unworthy of their Character. This Disgrace cannot but with a great deal of Reason reflect upon their Heads; and it is an evident demonstration either of their Negligence to remedy it, or their want of Charity to procure the means of it. The most part of these poor Priests in *Italy* live of their Masses, or else by Filching, when Masses fail them: They take all they can get, even in the Churches themselves; the Calices, the Linnen Covering of the Alter, the Wax-Candles, the Books, and in a word,

word, all that comes to hand. Wherefore we need make no difficulty to believe what this Noble *Venetian* averr'd, That ſome in the Scuffle had ſtolen the Cloaks of their Companions.

Another thing mentioned in his Diſcourſe, and whereon I deſire you to make ſome Reflection, is the great Diviſion and Enmity of thoſe Religious who went to demand the *Maſſes*: They accuſed one another as perſons without Conſcience, and falſe and faithleſs in diſcharging the Truſt they took upon them, and for which they were paid. What the *Jacobite* ſaid of the *Cordelier*, the very ſame the *Cordelier* ſaid of the *Jacobite*, and ſo of the reſt; and indeed herein they all ſpoke Truth. 'Tis a matter of common practice in *Italy*, That when any one ſends Mony to a Convent for an Hundred Maſſes, they content themſelves with ſinging one, with the aſſiſtance of a Deacon and Sub-deacon. 'Tis the Prior, or Guardian of the Colledge that ſings it: They call this a *Maß Sung*, an *High Maß*, a *Solemn Maß*; and they maintain that one of theſe *Maſſes* is an equivalent to many Common ones: They call this *making a Reduction*.

But, pray Sir, What can this Singing, or theſe Ceremonies contribute towards the rendring One *Maſs* as efficacious as an Hundred? I know a *Proteſtant* may eaſily ſolve this difficulty, by ſaying, That one Maſs is as good as an hundred, and that an hundred are of no more Value than one, becauſe they are good for nought, whether ſingly or aggregately conſider'd. But you who are a *Roman Catholick*, how can you anſwer this? If you have never

never ſo little ſincerity, you cannot but own that your *Prieſts* and *Monks*, are not only content for to ſatisfie their Covetouſneſs, to make uſe of the Doctrin of *Purgatory* to induce Lay-men to laviſh their Mony for the celebrating of *Maſſes*; but that after all this, they would by this Artifice of *Reduction*, exempt themſelves from the trouble of ſaying them.

The deceaſed Pope *Innocent* the Eleventh, was no way favouring this Trick of *Reduction*; for being inform'd, that the *Carmelites* of *Naples* had celebrated a *Maß* in Muſick, to acquit themſelves of all the Maſſes they were oblig'd to ſay, he ſent down a Commiſſion, to examine the Regiſters and Books of the *Sextry*; and upon Examination there were found no leſs than Four and forty thouſand *Maſſes*, which were not diſcharged. *Innocent* being acquainted herewith, did not believe that ſo vaſt a number of *Maſſes* could ever be ſatisfied by one *Maß* only, how ſolemn ſoever it might be. He let them know, That ſeeing they had receiv'd the Mony, they ought to ſay them with the firſt; and becauſe they had not Prieſts enough in their Convent to celebrate them, they muſt take in ſome Secular Prieſts to their aſſiſtance. The thing taking wind, and being divulg'd through *Naples*, many Stranger-Prieſts went and preſented themſelves to celebrate ſome of them, and for Fifteen days they admitted them; within which time they ſaid about Four thouſand *Maſſes* at ſeveral Altars; and the Fathers paid them at the Rate of the one half of what they had received for them. At the end of Three Weeks, ſome Prieſts that I

was acquainted with, came and told me, That having been to offer themſelves, to ſay more *Maſſes* for them, they were refus'd, and told, *That all the Maſſes were already celebrated*; tho' indeed it were a thing abſolutely impoſſible for ſo many *Maſſes* to be ſaid in that compaſs of Time: But the truth of the matter was, That they were griev'd at the heart to ſquander their Mony thus abroad, and therefore were reſolv'd rather to tell a groſs Lye, than to part with any more. They alledg'd for their Excuſe, *That they had celebrated ſeveral Maſſes at their Priviledg'd Altar.* This is another ſtratagem of thoſe Prieſts, which is never a whit inferiour to that of *Reduction*, and againſt which the Popes have nothing to alledge; for otherwiſe they would contradict themſelves, as to the power they pretend to have over the Affairs of *Purgatory.*

Theſe *Priviledg'd Altars* (as was hinted before) are ſuch as be Endow'd with great *Indulgences.* To obtain one of theſe Altars, great Sums of Mony muſt be given; but what care they, as long as the bubled Multitude refund it an Hundredfold. A *Maß* celebrated at this ſort of Altars, on ſuch a Day of the Week, which commonly is *Monday*, doth infallibly deliver a Soul out of *Purgatory*; and a man who ſhould dare to queſtion this, would be look'd upon as an Heretick, and committed to the *Inquiſition*, as if he had deny'd one of the Fundamentals of Chriſtianity. According now to this Principle, they argue thus; (and indeed, granting their Suppoſition, I find their Argu-

Argument strong enough) *The Pope* (say they) *grants a Priviledge to one of our Altars, and declares, That when any shall procure a Maß to be said there for any Soul in* Purgatory, *tho' the most obnoxious that is there, it shall in the same moment be deliver'd thence. Now, the Pope is Infallible in all he declares, especially about the Concerns of the other World; wherefore to draw to a Conclusion, We have Mony sent us to celebrate so many Hundred or Thousand Masses, to say for such a Man or Woman; What is to be done in this Case?* Frustra fit per plura, quod fieri potest per pauciora; 'Tis a folly to go about, when there lies a short Cut before us; *We'll therefore cause one Maß to be said at our Priviledg'd Altar, which will infallibly deliver the Party concern'd out of* Purgatory, *and will trouble our selves no farther about saying the rest; forasmuch as they, being only in order to procure the same end, would be altogether superflous and unprofitable; so that by this fair way we have (without the least Pains-taking) gain'd a good Lump of Mony, as well as without the least discomposure to our Peace of Conscience.* This Argument was once most vigorously enforc'd against the Jesuits of *Rome* upon this occasion.

A rich Merchant by his last Will had left them all his Estate, to have so many millions of *Masses* said for the Deliverance of his Soul from *Purgatory* after his Death: His near Kinsman, who of right was to have been his Heir, being made acquainted with his Will, lost no time; but as soon as he was dead, went to the Jesuits, and

gave them Mony to ſay a *Maſs* at their priviledg'd Altar, for the Soul of the deceaſed; he himſelf was preſent at it, and took an Atteſtation in writing of them, that they had ſaid it. Having done this, he order'd all the Goods of his Kinſman to be Arreſted; alledging, That the end of the Teſtament being obtain'd, the Goods ought to return to their Natural Channel; that is to ſay, to the Heir at Law; that he could prove, That his Relation was either in Paradiſe, or in Hell, and that in either of thoſe places he ſtood in no need of *Maſſes*. The Caſe was brought to the Bar, and pleaded with great heat on both ſides; the Jeſuits being Plaintiffs, and the Merchant the Defendant: But alas! the Caſe was to be determin'd by an Eccleſiaſtical Court, where all the Judges were Parties, who (had they done right) would have condemn'd what themſelves do every day: So the Suit was carried in Favour of the *Jeſuits*, under pretence forſooth, That the Church muſt always be favour'd. However, it is evident that Right and Reaſon were on the Merchant's ſide, and that he could not be condemn'd without Injuſtice. But I return to our *Confraternities*.

There is never a Village in *Italy*, how ſmall and inconſiderable ſoever, which has not a *Confraternity* for the Souls of *Purgatory*, and at the leaſt a Score of Prieſts, who live upon it very plentifully. Beſides the Mony they receive for their Maſſes, which never fails them, they have a ſort of people who carry Boxes through the Streets, from Houſe to Houſe, begging of all thoſe they meet with,

with

with a great deal of Importunity, ſome Mony for the Souls in *Purgatory*; which Mony the Prieſts afterwards ſhare amongſt themſelves. In many places of *Italy*, eſpecially in the great Cities, in order to their having a fix'd and ſetled Income, they Let to Farm this *Purgatory-Mony* to ſome Lay-man or other, as I have ſeen at *Milan*, in that famous Confraternity of the *Souls in Purgatory*, eſtabliſh'd in the Church of S. *John de Caſa Rotta*. The Farmer here pays Four thouſand Crowns every Year to the Prieſts of that Church, and makes his profit of the reſt: He maintains for this end Forty Box-Carriers, who are cloath'd in white, and wear upon their ſhort White-Cloaks the Arms of the *Confraternity*, to diſtinguiſh them. They have each of them a Shilling a Day allow'd them, and their Buſineſs is to run through all the Streets of the City, and beg Mony for the Souls in *Purgatory*. Theſe Box-Carriers are pickt Men, very cunning and skilful at their Trade of Begging. Sometimes they are ſo importunate and impertinent, that they follow a man the length of two or three Streets, without quitting him, to force him by their Importunity to give them ſomething. Neither is it without danger to give them any rude or churliſh Anſwer; for in that caſe, they have the Malice to tell you to your Face, *That they ſee well enough by you, you have no conſideration for the ſouls in Purgatory*: And ſhould you continue to Revile them, might probably get you recommended to the *Inquiſition*, to learn more manners. The Farmer of the *ſouls in Purgatory*, has the Keys of all

theſe Boxes, and they are bound once or twice a Week to bring them in to him. When at any time they bring them full and well lin'd, he gives them ſomething over and above their ordinary pay, to encourage them to perform the Queſt with ſo much the more application and dexterity. He takes care to place ſome of his Boxes in all Inns, Ordinaries, Taverns, Victualling-Houſes, and other publick Places. Thoſe who have travell'd *Italy* know, That the Hoſt doth commonly at the end of every Meal, bring in his Box for the Souls in *Purgatory*, and deſire his Gueſts to put in their Charity. At the time of Harveſt and Vintage, the Farmer ſends ſome of his Emiſſaries into the Fields, to carry on the Queſt there for the ſaid Souls; they have great Wagens with them, and beg ſome Portion of what is gather'd, in Corn, Wine, Wood, Rice, Hemp, even to the very Eggs and Hens. Which done, they either ſpend what they have got themſelves, or elſe ſell it and turn it to Mony.

Now the poor Country People being extreamly ſimple and ignorant, and the perſons employ'd to receive their Charity being very ſubtil and crafty, make them believe what they pleaſe themſelves, and ſo abuſe them extreamly. I over-heard once a poor Country-woman, who gave ſome Hemp to ſome of theſe crafty Collectors; ſaying, *She was very ſorry ſhe could not give them enough, to make a great ſhift of:* But one of the Queſt-men told her, *That they would take care to make a little ſhift of it, for ſome ſmall Soul in Purgatory.*

They

They turn'd their heads, and laugh'd at the ſimplicity of this poor Woman; but not one of them had the Charity to inform her better.

Ignorance in the Church of *Rome* paſſeth for *Simplicity*; and 'tis to this Ignorant Simplicity, or Simple Ignorance, that they attribute that Bleſſing of the Goſpel, *Bleſſed are the Poor in Spirit.* Whereas it ſeems to me, that this Poverty of Spirit is to be underſtood of a Simplicity equally devoid of Malice and Ignorance, and of a Candid and Open Spirit, without any foldings or deceit; or elſe of thoſe, who having their Hearts ſet looſe from the deſire of the Riches of this World, are the true Lovers of Evangelical Poverty. But to ſpeak truth, the Reaſon hereof is, Becauſe this Ignorant Simplicity, is a thing of ſuch exceeding Profit and Advantage to the Prieſts and Religious of *Rome.* The more Idiots the People are, the more eaſie it is to chowſe them, and to pick their Pockets.

This is, Sir, ſome part of what I have obſerv'd concerning the Uſe that is made of the Doctrin of *Purgatory* in *Italy.* I might produce many Inſtances of every different Point I have treated of in my LETTERS; but commonly I alledge one only, and very rarely two; and indeed never, but when ſome particular Circumſtance, which deſerves ones Notice, does oblige me to it. I ſhall only add a word or two concerning their *Pictures* of *Purgatory*, before I conclude this LETTER.

There is never a Church or Chappel in *Italy*, which has not ſome large Picture in it, repreſenting *Purgatory*. The Souls that are there are painted in the reſemblance of naked young Men and Women, with ſome Flames ſurrounding them; theſe Flames indeed are harmleſs enough, becauſe they burn not; but I fear thoſe infamous naked Figures, kindle very dangerous flames in the hearts of many Spectators. An *Italian* having caus'd his Miſtreſs to be painted in the Flames of *Purgatory*, becauſe ſhe had refus'd him ſome Favours, had theſe two Lines writ at the bottom of the Picture:

S' è così piacevole divederla in Purgatorio,
Che coſa ſarebbe divederla nel Cielo.

His Fancy was this: *If it be ſo pleaſing a thing to ſee her in Purgatory, where the Flames hide ſome part of her naked Body; how great would the pleaſure be, to ſee her painted in Heaven ſtark naked, where no part of her Body would be hid?* For after this manner do they of the Church of *Rome* repreſent the laſt Judgment, and the Bleſſed Souls in Heaven. They publickly expoſe theſe Pictures on their Altars, and the people have them before their Eyes, whilſt they hear Maſs. I know what they alledge, *That this is done, to impreſs theſe great Truths of Chriſtianity the more ſtrongly upon the Imagination*; as if Chriſtians were only to be led by their Imaginations, and not by their Reaſon. They will have a man to ſubmit his Reaſon in all things, and at the ſame time ſpare nothing

nothing for to fortifie his Imagination. Whereas the *Protestants* do quite the contrary, they disregard and neglect material things that so vigorously affect the Senses, that they may *worship God in spirit and in truth*, and render to him a *reasonable Service*.

They practise one thing in *Italy*, which indeed is very horrible. When a poor Criminal is led to punishment, he has always two Priests by his side, who hold a Picture of *Purgatory* before his Eyes; yea, they go up the Ladder or Scaffold with him, still holding the Picture before him till Execution be done, and talk to him of nothing else. Is not this indeed to double the Fright and Terrour of these poor Wretches, who are but too much terrified already with the Death they see prepared for them? The same thing they practise towards those that lie a Dying; They place a Picture of *Purgatory* at the Feet of their Bed, between two lighted Wax-Candles, to make it appear with more lustre, and the Patient is exhorted to keep his Eyes upon it. Some are fain to beseech them, to speak to them of the Goodness and Mercy of God, because they are already sufficiently terrified with his Justice: But for the most part, they do but knock at a Dead-man's door; for the Priests are so wedded to their Songs of *Purgatory*, that if they chance to make a small digression, they presently fall again into their old Track. For my part, I am of opinion, That after we have spoke to a sick person concerning the Justice of God, of punishing of sin in the other World, by the eternal pains of Hell, to the end to make him seriously examine his own Conscience;

it is very fitting afterwards to lay before him the great Mercy of God, to raiſe his Hope and enflame his Charity. We fear God, becauſe he is juſt to puniſh; but we love him, becauſe he is kind to pardon; and ſurely, 'tis better the laſt moments of a Chriſtians life ſhould be ſpent in loving God, than in the fears and terrors of his Judgments. This is that which hath caſt many into thoſe Terrours, which wanted little of downright Deſpair. But alas! it is but too evident, That the Doctrin of *Purgatory* was never contrived ſo much for the Comfort of dying perſons, as for the Profit of the Living, I mean of thoſe lazy Prieſts, who think of nothing, but of pleaſing themſelves, and to enjoy Eaſe and Plenty in this World.

I ſhould now come to ſpeak ſomething of the principal means they make uſe of, to confirm and maintain their Doctrin of *Purgatory*, which is to preach it up with an incomparable Zeal and Earneſtneſs. I call to mind alſo, that I promis'd you at the beginning of this LETTER, to give you ſome account of their manner of preaching in *Italy*: But foraſmuch as I perceive my LETTER to be long enough already, and that this Subject cannot be diſpatch'd in few words, I ſhall reſerve it for the next occaſion I ſhall have of writing to you; and in the mean time, Sir, I beſeech you to believe, that I ſhall continue all my Life,

Your, &c.

The

The Sixth LETTER,

Of the deplorable Abuſe of Preaching in Italy, &c.

YOU know, Sir, That that which ſupports the Church of God, and is (as it were) the Life and Soul of it, are the Sacraments and the Word of God; wherefore it is of the higheſt Conſequence, that both theſe be faithfully and decently adminiſtred; and I ſhall always take the due and faithful Diſpenſation thereof for a ſure Mark of the true Church. This motive engag'd me, whilſt I was at *Rome*, particularly to inſpect the Practices of the Church of *Rome*; in reference to both theſe. I ſuppos'd I could not meet with any place more favourable to this my deſign than this great City, which boaſts her ſelf (if we will believe her) not only to contain within her Precinct, the principal and Mother Church of the whole World; but over and above, doth attribute to Her ſelf (tho' it be hard to ſay upon what good ground) the Name of HOLY, *Roma Sancta*. As for what concerns the Adminiſtration of the Sacraments, I cannot deny, but the ſame is performed there both very orderly and ſolemnly, and indeed with an overplus of Ceremonies, even to Superſtition. Here I ſhould give

give you an account of those Ceremonies which are observ[illegible]at the Consecration of Priests, the Celebrating of the Eucharist, and of the pompous Preparations that are made against *Easter*, the week before, called *The Holy Week*; which by their splendor and magnificence, draw an infinite number of Strangers to *Rome*, towards the end of *Lent*, to be Spectators thereof. It is a common saying, *That he who would pass his time most agreeably in* Italy, *must be at* Venice *at* Shrovetide *and* Ascension-day; *the* Octave *of the Holy Sacrament at* Bononia, *and the* Holy Week *at* Rome.

Here also I should have occasion to Relate to you an infinite Number of Fopperies, that are practis'd here on certain Feasts in the Year; as at *Christmass*, *Ascension*, and *Pentecost*; but because this would take up a great deal of time, I shall pass them by in silence at present; to enlarge my self on a more considerable Subject, wherewith my intent is to Entertain you particularly at this time, which is, their way and manner of preaching. Asmuch as there is of Superstition and Excess in the pompous Administration of their Sacraments; so great a Deficiency, Negligence, and Unfaithfulness do we meet with in the Dispensing of the Word. During the space of seven years that I was in *Italy*, in all the Cities where I have been at the Times of *Advent* and *Shrovetide*, I have heard a vast number of Sermons; but I have never seen or known any Curate, or Secular Priest, to preach, except once a Canon at S. *John* of *Lateran*, and a Cardinal on *Easter-day*, in the Cathedral Church of

of *Milan*: So that in caſe the Word of God be corrupted and abus'd, as indeed it is very conſiderably every day, we cannot charge the Secular Prieſts of *Italy* therewith, who do not preach at all, or who indeed are (for the moſt part) ſo Ignorant, that they cannot; if they would; but the Fault is wholly to be laid at the Door of the *Monks*, and other Religious, who have in a manner wholly engroſs'd the performance thereof. Methinks it is enough ſaid, when I tell you, That the true Paſtors, who are the *Curates*, take no pains to feed their own Flock, but recommend that Care to Strangers, I mean to *Monks*, who are more ſollicitous to ſatisfie their own Intereſt and Vain-glory, than to procure the ſalvation of Souls. Yea, the *Monks* have ſo abſolutely poſſeſs'd themſelves of this Miniſtry, that they will not ſuffer a Secular Prieſt to preach in his own Church; and if any of them ſhould undertake ſo to do, and they ſhould find that they could not ſupplant him, they would maliciouſly employ all manner of means to blacken and miſrepreſent him in the eyes of the people, and rob him of his Credit and Reputation.

True it is, that on the other hand, the *Curates* being generally Lovers of Eaſe and Idleneſs, make no great endeavours to reclaim their Right to the Pulpit: They declare openly, That it is the buſineſs of the *Monks* to preach, foraſmuch as not being engag'd in the Buſineſs and Trouble of the World, they have leiſure enough in their Monaſteries to ſtudy and con their Sermons; but that as for them, being wholly employ'd in the Adminiſtration

of

of the Sacraments, in hearing of Confeſſions, and aſſiſting at Funerals, they have no ſpare time to turn their Thoughts that way. So that we ſeldom meet with any Quarrels on this Occaſion between them and the *Monks*.

Whilſt I was at *Rome*, I often went to the *Minerva* to hear Sermons: They are the Father *Dominicans* that preach here, who are alſo called *The Preaching Brothers*; becauſe in the ſharing and diviſion of the Gifts and Graces of God, the *Monks* have made amongſt themſelves, theſe have boldly appropriated to themſelves the Gift of Preaching. But we find that this is nothing but an arrogant Uſurpation of theirs, without the Conſent of the Holy Spirit; for I have ſcarcely found any *Monks* more unſucceſsful in this Miniſtry than themſelves. God will never permit the pride of men to diſpoſe of thoſe Gifts which belong to him alone. The *Jeſuits* have arrogated to themſelves the Gifts of Tongues, and of informing Youth; and yet Experience ſhews, that they are indeed very ignorant and unskilful in both theſe; and that the Scholars who have ſtudied in the Univerſities under other Maſters, are incomparably better grounded in Learning, than theirs are. The Monks of S. *Bennet* have appropriated to themſelves the Character of *Retirement* and *Silence*, and yet we find no people more gadding up and down in Cities and Country, than they.

But to return to my Diſcourſe; It was one of theſe Old *Dominican*, or preaching Brothers, that preached at the *Minerva*; but he did it in ſo unworthy

unworthy and indecent a manner, that I wonder how I could reſolve to go and hear him more than once. All that was attractive in him was, That notwithſtanding he was very Old, yet he was extreamly Comical, and an egregious Buffoon: ſo that he made his Auditors laugh with open Throats: He walked in his Pulpit (for in *Italy* they have them very long and wide); he thump'd the Pulpit with his Hands and Feet; he roll'd his Eyes in his Head, and put himſelf into an hundred ridiculous Poſtures.

I ſhall give you here a ſmall ſcantling of one of his Sermons, which I ſtill remember, that by the Pattern ye may judge of the whole Piece. He had a mind it ſeems, to make a moral Application of the Hiſtory ſet down in the XXI. Chapter of the Book of *Geneſis*, where *Abraham* turn'd his Maid *Hagar* out of doors. He begins thus; *Sirs*, ſaid he, *come follow me, and take a walk with me in the Holy Scripture*; Then fetching three ſteps in the Pulpit, having one of his Arms a kimbow, he ſtopt ſhort at the fourth, and as a man who in an horrid Deſert ſaw ſome Body at a great diſtance, he ſtood ſtill a good while without ſpeaking a word, and very attentively fixing his Eyes till the near approach of the Object; he began to ſay, *What is that I ſee there? ſure it is a Woman*; and keeping ſilence again a good while, he ſaid, *O God! if I been't much miſtaken, 'tis* Hagar, Abraham's *ſervant: Ay, ſure enough 'tis the very ſame. God ſave you* Hagar! *Prethee tell me what is thy Buſineß here in this loanſom Deſert, which*

is

is ſo diſmal and frightful to Nature? Then making as if he view'd her from head to foot; *I perceive one thing already,* (ſaid he) *that ſhe has not robb'd her Maſter, as many ſervants do now-a-days; for ſhe is in a very pitiful Equipage. Tell me,* Hagar, *Why is it then you have left your Maſter?* Here making *Hagar* ſpeak in a moſt afflicted and ſorrowful manner, and as it were all in Tears, *That it was becauſe of her Miſtreſſes Jealouſie*; he anſwered laughing, *A very fine Reaſon believe me; What, was this all? Hum! this is very pleaſant; Madam* Sarah *turns away her ſervant, becauſe ſhe is jealous of her. Come* Hagar, *come thou along with me; I'le at this inſtant go and ſpeak to thy Maſter about it.* And then taking ſeven or eight Turns in the Pulpit, muttering all the while to himſelf; Sarah *turns away her ſervant, becauſe ſhe is jealous of her; a ſtanch Reaſon indeed*; and then ſtopt, ſtriking two great Thumps againſt the Pulpit, he ſaid, *Who is there? Pray tell* Abraham *I would ſpeak with him*; and ſoon after making a very low Bow, as if he had ſeen *Abraham*, he ſaid to him, Abraham, *pray tell me for what Reaſon you have turn'd away your ſervant* Hagar? *ſhe tells me it is, becauſe your Wife is jealous of her:* Then perſonating *Abraham, Abraham* anſwers him, *If I have turn'd away my ſervant, I have had an Order from God for it, and therefore don't think my ſelf bound to give you any further Reaſon of it. Tho' indeed* Hagar *has not told you all; It was not only upon the account of Jealouſie ſhe was turn'd out of Doors;*

Doors, but becauſe ſhe has a little Boy of her own, that is very naughty, he beats him that I had by my Wife; they are continually wrangling together; they pull one another by the Hair; they cry, and make an intolerable noiſe in the Houſe. My Wife has ſeveral times ſpoke friendly to her Servant about it, but Hagar *is become too bold and impertinent, ſhe gives ſawcy Anſwers, and has too much Tongue: For theſe Reaſons therefore, and to have quiet in mine Houſe, I have been fain to turn her out of Doors.* Here the old Father *Dominican*, rolling his Eyes in his Head, and wrinkling his Brow, as one that was very angry with *Hagar*, *Hagar*, ſaid he, *I find now, that thou didſt not tell me the Cream of the Jeſt: Thou art juſt like the Servants of* Rome, *when they are turn'd out of Service, 'tis never any of their Fault, 'tis becauſe their Miſtreſſes are of an intollerable difficult Temper; they are exceeding humorſom; they are very Jealous, and 'tis impoſſible to live with them: But by what I can perceive, it was becauſe you began to play the Miſtreſs, and becauſe there was a continual diſturbance in the Houſe upon your account. I know well enough, that Jealouſie could not be a ſufficient Reaſon for ſending a good Servant patking; for otherwiſe our* Roman *Dames, who are extreamly jealous, would never be able to keep any: But there muſt be this beſides in the caſe, That this Jealouſie cauſeth Diſturbance and Noiſe in the Houſe between the Husband and his Wife, or between the Children; and then I am clearly of* Abraham's *Opinion, The Servant muſt turn out*, Ejice Ancillam

& filium ejus. The Father, after he had very dexterously plaid the Buffoon on this History of the Bible, past on to another, which he handled in the same Comical manner, making all his Hearers to burst out into a loud laughter: And after all, fell upon the Devotion common to their Order, which is the *Rosary*; for they bring this in by the head and shoulders upon all occasions, let their Subjects be what they please. This was his constant mode of preaching, and the Church was always full of people.

The *Italians* are extreamly in love with Sermons that make them laugh, which is the reason that the most part of their Preachers apply themselves to a comical and drolling style. The *Jesuits* have another way of preaching, which I may call a *Poetical Style*: For they being persons who have spent their young Years in teaching Human Learning in their Colledges, they have their Head and Fancies fill'd with *Ovid*'s *Metamorphosis* and *Æsop*'s *Fables*, and accordingly all their Sermons are stust with them. If they speak concering the *Incarnation of the Word*, they would think they had not expresst themselves well, without saying, That the Divine *Prometheus* brought down Fire from Heaven to the Earth; that is to say, *Has personally united the Divine with the Human Nature.* They commonly quote a vast number of Passages drawn from profane Authors and Poets; as from *Cicero*, *Virgil*, *Horace*, *Martial*, *&c.* yea, I have heard some of them that have quoted *Terence*'s Comedies, and *Ovid de Arte Amandi*; but they very

very ſeldom are heard citing the Fathers, and yet more ſeldom the Holy Scripture. The great Converſe they have with Perſons of Quality, makes their Words and Expreſſions to be choice; their Diſcourſe neat and refin'd, tho' ſubſtance and ſolidity be for the moſt part wanting in them; their Geſture is very proper, and their Declamation or Elocution not amiſs. For to gain the more credit to their Order, which is of late ſtanding, and yet ſo powerful, they very frequently quote the Book of the Exerciſes of their Founder S. *Ignatius*; which after all, is but a very poor Book, and (as 'tis ſaid) none of his own neither, having ſtoln it when he was Convert Brother in the Abby of the *Benedictins* of *Montſerra*.

The *Capuchins* have another way of preaching, and their ſtyle is Stoical, Emphatical, and Thundering: They commonly make choice of very terrible Subjects, as *Death*, the *Laſt Judgment*, *Purgatory*, and *Hell*: They fill the Air with Exclamations, thump the Pulpit with their Hands and Feet; they lay hold of their great Beards, and roar with ſuch a Tone, as terrifies all Men, yea, and the Dogs too; for I have obſerv'd, That when a *Capuchin* preaches, all the Dogs run out of the Church. In a word, almoſt all the Religious have a different way of preaching, and different Divines too, whom they follow, whoſe Opinions are frequently oppoſite to one another. The *Cordeliers* have their *Scotus* and S. *Bonaventura*; the *Dominicans*, S. *Thomas*; the *Jeſuits*, their *Suarez*; and ſo of the reſt.

As for the Order obſerv'd as to Partition of their Sermon, 'tis the ſame throughout all *Italy*. They all begin their Sermons with the *Angelical Salutation*, or *Ave Maria*; and not with the Invocation of our Heavenly Father, in praying, *Our Father, &c.* or by calling upon the *Holy Ghoſt*, which yet are the moſt proper, or rather the only Neceſſary for this purpoſe. But indeed, the Doctrin they preach is ſo extreamly corrupt and wreſted, that it is no wonder to find their Introductions tainted with the ſame Infection. God by this very thing manifeſting to us, That what they preach is not the pure Word of God, by permitting them to Preface their Human Inventions with the Invocation of a Creature. After their Addreſs to the *Virgin*, they pronounce their Text, which commonly is a place of Scripture, or ſometimes a part of a Prayer of their Church, or ſome Entrance of the Maſs. They cite the Texts of Scripture only by halves, and in an abſtract and interrupted Senſe, without declaring what goes before, or follows after; which yet they ought to do, to render the Senſe perfect. After this they proceed to their Propoſition, and then continue their Diſcourſe all of a piece, without any Diviſions or Subdiviſions at all. They divide their Sermon indeed into Two Parts; but the ſecond is nothing elſe but an heap of Examples, Hiſtories, and Tales made at pleaſure, to divert their Auditors. In the Interval between this firſt and ſecond Part, they gather the Alms in the Church for the Poor. There are Men appointed for this purpoſe, who have Bags faſtned to the end of long Staves,

Staves, with little Bells at the bottom of them, and they paſs by all the Ranks and Seats of the Hearers, to receive their Charity. The Preacher in the mean time, whilſt theſe Bags or Purſes are marching about, doth with an incomparable Zeal exhort them to give freely.

I never in my life ſaw people more enflam'd with Charity for their Neighbour, than they are in the Pulpit; you would ſay, *They are the very Fathers of the Poor.* Herein I cannot but do them the Juſtice to own, That our *Proteſtant Miniſters* are not ſo good Advocates for the neceſſitous Members of Jeſus Chriſt, and do not take the Cauſe of the Poor to heart, with ſo much heat and zeal, as theſe men do. However, Sir, I would have you know, that when I praiſe your *Italian* Monks, 'tis not their Perſons I praiſe, but their Action, or rather the external Appearance of their Action: For if we cut this fair Apple in two, we ſhall find the Worm there, which makes it all rotten and corrupt within. To make ſhort, my meaning is, That the Motive that prompts them ſo ſeriouſly and zealouſly to recommend the Poor to their Auditors, is a piece of Self-intereſt: For the one half of the Alms that are gathered in the Church, as well as at the Church door, during the Sermon, belongs to the Father-Preacher: Otherwiſe, it were impoſſible to induce thoſe hard-hearted and pitileſs Monks, thoſe hearts of braſs and marble, who are ſo ſignally qualified with inſenſibleneſs and cruelty; I ſay, it would be impoſſible to induce them to any ſentiments of mercy and compaſſion for the Miſeries

of their Neighbour, if Lay-men had not found out a way to joyn the Intereſt of the Preachers with that of the Poor, and to make but one of them. This, this Sir, is the great Spring that moves the whole Engin, and makes the Monks to ſtudy ſuch importunate Motives and Reaſons, to draw Mony from their Hearers Purſes: Yea, there be ſome of them, who are ſo extreamly Malepert and Inſolent, that I am aſtoniſh'd they do not pull them out of the Pulpit.

I went one day in *Lent* to hear one of the Sermons at the Church of S. *Andrew* of the *Valley* at *Rome*; it was a Father *Franciſcan* that then preach'd there; his Sermon was concerning *Predeſtination*, and after he had declar'd, That the number of thoſe that were predeſtinate, was not ſo ſmall as ſome did imagin; *I ſpeak now* (ſaid he) *of* Catholicks; *for as for all Infidels, who do not believe in Jeſus Chriſt, as well as all* Hereticks, *as the* Lutherans, Calviniſts, Zuinglians, &c. *our Mother* (*the Holy Church Catholick, Apoſtolick, and Roman*) *teacheth us, that they are all undoubtedly damn'd, and we ought to believe accordingly.* Afterwards, making a long enumeration of all thoſe he firmly believ'd would certainly be ſaved, he amongſt the reſt mention'd all thoſe who were enroll'd in the Confraternity of S. *Francis* his *Rope*, which peculiarly belongs to thoſe of his Order; *Becauſe* (ſaid he) *it is impoſſible, according to the Bulls we have concerning it, from the Popes, that any ſuch ſhould die in any Mortal Sin.* He very frankly allow'd the ſame Grace alſo to all thoſe who wore the

Habit

Habit of his Order, and ſo very handſomly juſtled in himſelf into the number of the Elect. Finally, putting a Queſtion to himſelf, Whether there were not ſome viſible Mark upon Earth, by which one might diſtinguiſh the Elect from the Reprobate? he anſwer'd himſelf, *Yes, that certainly there were ſuch Signs.* Amongſt other Signs he reckon'd up, I remember this was one, *To love Muſick, and the ſound of Inſtruments*; but that the principal Sign of all was, *To give Alms.* This indeed was the Point he would be at, and very dexterouſly he took occaſion from hence, to Exhort all his Auditory, *To expoſe that Day to the Eyes of all Men, the undoubted Tokens of their Predeſtination, by their liberal putting into the Purſes; and that for his part he would take exact notice from his ſtation on high, of all thoſe who gave this Evidence of their Election, that ſo he might know who were Reprobate, and who were Predeſtinate amongſt them.* Accordingly he ſets himſelf down in his Pulpit, and was ſilent; and ſtaring with his great Eyes that way they carried the Bags, having perceived all the firſt Rank had ſhewed themſelves very Liberal: *This is well*, ſaid he, *I find that here is one Rank already of my Auditors that are Predeſtinate:* And the ſecond and third having follow'd the ſame Example; *In very truth* (ſaid he) *I believe, that my whole Auditory will prove to be of the number of the Elect. This is an extraordinary Comfort for me, that I have preach'd here this* Lent, *and I render thanks to God for it; becauſe it is a ſign that ſinners are converted.*

By this means the Father procur'd a very liberal Collection. I obſerv'd all this while, that he put many of his Auditors into great trouble and confuſion, eſpecially ſome Women, who probably had no Mony about them; they bluſht exceedingly, and to avoid the confuſion of being accounted Reprobates, they reach'd forth their Hands to the Bags, as if they had put in ſomething. I my ſelf heard an Handicrafts-man ſaying to one of his Acquaintance, *That Monk there (with his ſigns of Predeſtination) made me, ſore againſt my will, put a Crown into the Bag, becauſe I had no other ſmall Mony about me; for if I had given nothing, it would have ſpoil'd my Reputation; they would have taken me for a damn'd Wretch, which would have been enough to have frighted all Cuſtomers from my Shop.*

The Monk raviſh'd to have ſeen ſo many Elect in his Auditory, very joyfully fell to the ſecond part of his Diſcourſe, and being put into an extream good humor by their Liberality, he play'd the Buffoon to admiration. After he had told them many little pleaſant Stories, he began his ſecond Queſt for the Souls in *Purgatory*. He made uſe of the ſame Motive, with which he had ſpeeded ſo well before. He repreſented to them, *That it was not enough to have ſhew'd their Charity to the Living, but that it was neceſſary for the compleating of the Evidence of their Predeſtination, to extend it alſo to thoſe that are dead*; that is, *to the Members of the Suffering Church*; for that is the Title they give to *Purgatory*. The Mony of this

Queſt

Queſt goes to the Prieſts or Monks to whom the Church belongs where the Sermon is preached; and to encourage the Preacher to do it more effectually, they allow him the fourth part of the Collection. This is that which makes them ſo zealous to Exhort the people from their Pulpits, to a Liberal Contribution. There are ſome who are ſo far tranſported with Zeal for theſe ſuffering Souls, that not content to have made one Queſt in general on this Subject, they back the ſame with two others. The Second is with an intention to Relieve ſome Relation or Friend, that any of the Auditors are more particularly obliged to aſſiſt; and the Third for that Soul in *Purgatory*, which is the moſt neglected as to matter of Suffrages, and who hath neither Relations nor Friends to pray God for her. Thus it is that theſe fooliſh and raſh Men, imprudently exalt their own Mercy and Compaſſion above that of God himſelf; implying, That if their Charity did not extend it ſelf to theſe wretched Souls, deſtitute of all help and aſſiſtance, as they ſay, God would be pitileſs and cruel enough, to let them ſuffer a vaſt number of Years, yea, even to the Day of Judgment, without ſhewing any Mercy to them.

I have been told a ſtory of a Country-man, who perceiving that the Preacher of his Pariſh, after having made three Queſts one after another, was about to make the fourth, for the Soul that ſuffer'd the moſt, call'd out to him aloud, *Father, I would adviſe you to ſhut up your Purgatory at preſent; for if you let one Soul more out, ſhe will be in danger*

to

to return from whence ſhe came, without any thing: For my part (ſaid he) *I tell you plainly, I have no more Mony to give.* Whether this be a true ſtory, or no, I cannot aver; only this I know, that very often they give a fair occaſion for their Auditors to ſay as much. 'Tis in the Interval of their gathering this Collect, that the good Father Preachers do utter whatſoever comes into their Crowns, to perſuade their Auditors to ſo charitable a Work. Here it is, that with a great deal of heat they vent all their Fables and Tales of *Purgatory*.

I heard a Father *Carmelite* in the Pariſh of S. *Sophia* in *Venice*, who having made a ſign with his Hand, to oblige his Auditory to be ſilent, and liſtning attentively with his Ear, as if he had heard ſomething, he at length asked them, Whether they did not hear a kind of indiſtinct Noiſe, as of many Voices at at a diſtance? Afterwards, lending his Ear a ſecond time, he told them, That he heard the Souls of *Purgatory* calling upon them, *Not to ſpare their Charities, but to Relieve them with a Liberal Contribution*; corrupting to this purpoſe that Paſſage of the *Revelation*, *Audivi ſub Altare Animas interfectorum clamantium, vindica ſanguinem noſtrum, Deus noſter*; *I heard under the Altar the Souls of thoſe that were ſlain*; *Crying, Avenge our Blood, O God*: For he made bold to change moſt of the words, to accommodate them to his purpoſe; ſaying, *Audio ſub Altare Animas defunctorum clamantium, Refrigerare Sanguinem noſtrum Fratres noſtri*; *I heard under the Altar the Souls in Purgatory, that cry, Refreſh and cool our Blood*

our

our dear Brethren. I took this Action of the Preacher for an excellent Figure of Rhetorick, which is called *Fictio*; but I am ſure, that many there did not take it in my ſenſe, but did really believe, that the Preacher had indeed heard the Souls in *Purgatory* crying under the high Altar; a ſure ſign of which was, that many roſe up from their Seats to look that way. The Sermon being ended, the Preacher comes down out of the Pulpit, and is led into the *Sextry*; whither the Purſes are brought, and there they are open'd in his preſence, and his ſhare or dividend counted out to him; the Preachers herein reſembling Fowls of Prey, or Hunting-Dogs, to whom always a portion is given of the Prey they have taken.

In thoſe parts of *Italy* that border upon *Germany* and *France*, the people don't ſuffer the Prieſts and Monks to lead them by the Noſe, ſomuch as the Inhabitants of the Provinces that are nearer to *Rome*. True it is, the Prieſts are not wanting to uſe their utmoſt Endeavours to bring their *Purgatory* into Requeſt; but the Lay-men look upon them no better than Mountebanks for their pains, who ſpare no Lies to perſuade the people to buy their Drugs.

I was once deſired by the Curate of *Campo Dolcino* in the *Alpes*, to take the pains to clamber up to Mount *Splug*, to go and preach the Day of the Aſſumption of the *Bleſſed Virgin*, in a ſmall Village. I went thither, and did my utmoſt Endeavour to ſtir up their Devotion, and make it beneficial to their Curate; but it was impoſſible for me

me to exalt their Beneficence beyond a few pounds of Butter, notwithſtanding the Curate had earneſtly entreated me, to be importunate with them for ſome Mony. *Mony* it ſeems is very ſcarce in thoſe Mountains, they affording nothing beſides Butter, Cheeſe, Cheſnuts, and Salt-meat; and the poor Country people carry to the Church ſuch as they have, to beſtow upon their Curate. At the place where I went to preach, the Inhabitants cannot continue, but about Two Months in the very midſt of the Summer; after which the extream Cold drives them from thence, and obliges them to remove lower, where they continue about Two Months longer with their Cattle; thus deſcending by degrees, till they come down to the Vallies, where they continue all the Winter. But to return to our Preachers.

The Second part of their Sermon, as is already mention'd, is made up of nothing but idle Tales and Drollery; which is the reaſon why many perſons, who take no delight in theſe Jeſts and Fooleries, and probably alſo, for fear they ſhould be forced againſt their wills, by the Impudence of the Preacher, to put Mony into the Purſes, go out of the Church towards the end of the firſt part. This firſt part contains the Body and Subſtance of their Diſcourſe; and they who print their *Quadrageſimals* and their *Advent* Sermons, that they may not diſparage themſelves, never print the ſecond part of them; but make a ſhift to divide their firſt part, and make two of it.

The

The *Buffoon*, or *Comical Preachers*, are the moſt follow'd by the common people; but thoſe that preach by curious Thoughts, are the moſt eſteem'd; and thoſe who are call'd *Docti*, or *Virtuoſi*, do generally frequent them. This way of preaching by curious Thoughts, conſiſts chiefly in never repreſenting things in their natural Senſe. If they alledge a Text of Scripture, it is a Senſe that is forc'd, ſubtil, curious, and far-fetch'd, which is not the meaning of the Scripture; and a Preacher who ſhould ſtop at the Literal and Natural Senſe, would be look'd upon no better than a Simpleton, *Ignoramus*, and Ideot; and except he had ſomething of a Comical Air with him, would be very ſlenderly provided with Auditors. I have made it my Obſervation, That they commonly take no place of Scripture in the Literal Senſe, beſides the Sacramental words, *Hoc eſt Corpus meum*; *This is my Body*; for here they obſtinately keep to the Letter. And yet I once heard a Father *Minim*, in *Trinity* Church on the Hill, at *Rome*, who interpreted the whole Hiſtory of the Inſtitution of the Lord's Supper in another Senſe, applying it wholly to the Doctrin of Alms. *Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt* (ſaid he) *the more engagingly to recommend to us the Care of the Poor, would have the laſt Action he ever did here on Earth, ſhould be an Act of Charity; to this purpoſe, when he had nothing more to diſpoſe of, ſave one poor Morſel of Bread he had in his hands, He brake it, and gave it to his Diſciples.* This Thought of his was found very quaint and curious; tho' in the mean time it is very evident, that this

this is not the true and natural Senſe of the Holy Hiſtory; for Jeſus Chriſt in this Action, did not in the leaſt pretend to give an Alms, but to inſtitute a Sacrament, that might ſerve for the Suſtenance and Spiritual Nouriſhment of our Souls. However, the Monk was extraordinarily applauded for this his curious Thought, and he was not wanting to make good uſe of it at his Queſt. And to the end they may be the more fruitful and copious in theſe fine Thoughts, the Monks ordinarily Retire, and take their Walks in pleaſant places, as in Gardens and Woods, there to meditate their Sermons: Others again, betake themſelves to dark and ſubterranean places, there to Contemplate without diſturbance. Some of them drink good Wine, and that in good quantity too, becauſe (according to the common Proverb) *Vinum acuit Ingenium*; *Wine excites Invention:* And laſtly, others follow their particular Humors.

The Superiours of Religious Houſes, ſuffer their preaching Monks to do what they pleaſe, and go whither they will, to favour their Invention, or (as they term it) their curious Thoughts. They deal with them as charily, as we us'd to do with Big-bellied Women, whom nothing muſt be refuſed, for fear of ſpoiling their Fruit, which are their fine Thoughts. 'Tis this great Liberty and Indulgence that makes ſo many Monks in *Italy* apply themſelves to preaching, becauſe being once engaged in this way, they are exempted from all the Obſervances their Rule obligeth them to.

The

The way of ſetting forth theſe their fine Thoughts in the Pulpit, is this; As ſoon as they have utter'd any thing that is neat and curious, to make appear, that it doth not want ſolidity, they (in order to back it) endeavour to find out ſome Texts of Scripture that ſeem to favour it, and to which, for the moſt part, they give as forc'd a turn, as to that which is the Baſis and Ground of their neat Thought. They commonly quote nothing but ends and ſcraps of Verſes, without telling what goes before, or what follows, and ſeldom or never cite the Books from whence they are taken. They content themſelves with ſaying, *As it is written*; or *According to the Oracle of the Holy Spirit*; or, *As it is ſet down in the Sacred Texts*; and then quote the place they intend: But it is impoſſible to know, whether what they alledge, be faithfully Reported by them or no. Thus it is an eaſie thing for theſe Corrupters of the Holy Writ, (that they may Authorize their neat Thoughts, and high Sublimations of Wit) to ſeduce poor people which never read the Scripture, and to whom the reading of it is not ſo much as permitted. After they have thus endeavour'd to back their curious Thought with Scripture, they endeavour further to ſtrengthen it by the Authority of the Fathers. They reckon amongſt the Fathers, not only the ancient Doctors of the Church, as S. *Chryſoſtom*, S. *Ambroſe*, S. *Jerom*, S. *Auſtin*, *&c.* but alſo their moſt Modern Doctors, as S. *Thomas Aquinas*, Cardinal *Bellarmin*, *&c.* inſomuch as at this rate they have a very large and wide Field to go a pickeering in, and foraſmuch as it is an ordinary Saying, that

that *Good Wits jump*, this egregiouſly flatters their Pride, to make out to the people, That thoſe great Underſtandings of Ancient times do accord ſo well with theirs. Some have the ſottiſh Vanity to ſay in the Pulpit, *S.* Auſtin, *or S.* Ambroſe, *had the ſame Thought with me, when he ſaid, &c.* They very ſeldom quote the Books and Chapters from whence they have their Authorities, and they content themſelves with ſaying in general, *As ſaith S.* Auſtin; *As S.* Ambroſe *affirms*. But Experience does evidence it beyond diſpute, That they cite a vaſt number of Authorities falſly, or elſe do ſo extreamly mangle and corrupt them, that if we ſhould go to look for them in the Original, from whence they pretend to have drawn them, it would be a very hard matter to know them.

I once heard a *Benedictin* Monk in the Church of S. *Praxed* at *Rome*, who having made an Objection to himſelf, Why amongſt ſo many perſons, who have recourſe to the *Bleſſed Virgin* in their needs, ſo few are relieved by Her? An Event indeed which ſeems directly oppos'd to the Belief of the Church of *Rome*, *viz.* That all thoſe who Addreſs themſelves with Confidence to the *Bleſſed Virgin*, are infallibly aſſiſted by her. He anſwer'd this Objection by ſaying, *That thoſe who fail'd of her Aid, were ſuch as did not Lift up their Hearts to her. They indeed* (ſaid he) *do often enough Lift up their Eyes, their Hands, and their Voice to* Mary; *but their Hearts all the while are grovelling on the Earth, and they never lift them up towards her.* To this purpoſe he quoted S. *Jerom, Si volu-*

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mus exaudiri à Maria, *erigamus corda nostra ad* Mariam; *If we would have* Mary *hear us, we must lift up our hearts to* Mary. I have read S. *Jerom* before, and I have read him over since, having always this passage of the *Benedictin* well impreſt in my memory, but I could never find it there; and I am well assur'd that no body will be able to find it there after me: But the Myſtery of it was, That this paſſage was very proper to back and confirm the fine thought of the Monk.

We need not wonder to find the *Roman Catholicks* boaſt of having the Fathers on their ſide; for if at any time they are not ſo, they ſoon make them come over to them by force, and draw them in (as we ſay) by head and ſhoulders. In this caſe they do imitate another *Italian* Monk, who not being able to make a paſſage of S. *Chryſoſtom* favour a fine thought was come into his head, he began to be in a paſſion, and having chang'd two or three words in the Text, which did in a manner ſpoil the whole ſenſe of it, he ſaid in bad Latin, but very expreſſive of what he would be at, *Faciam te bene venire*, and thus forc'd the Text to comply with his fooliſh Imaginations. By this means it is theſe miſerable Monks make thoſe venerable ancient Fathers to aſſert that which they never thought of, and can never be found in their Writings; and all this is only to feed their vain-glorious humor, and to obtrude their own Dreams for Authentick Truths, own'd and believ'd by the pureſt Times of Chriſtendom.

Moreover, to ſet forth theſe their curious Thoughts with the greater luſtre, they do adorn them with many quaint Figures of Rhetorick; all their Diſcourſe being made up of Metaphors, Alluſions, and holy Allegories, with a taking Elocution, and curious ſelect Words; and all of them *Antitheta*, or oppos'd to one another, wherein the *Italian* Language is happy beyond others. See here the fair and glittering Cup of Gold, wherein the Whore mingles her Poyſon, Lyes and Errors, to intoxicate the Souls of Men. This is the wide Gate by which ſo many extravagant and dangerous Opinions are entred into the Church of *Rome*. You may eaſily judge by the Nature of the Paſture, of the Condition the Flock is in; and by the Qualifications of their new Paſtors, I mean the Monks, the wretched Eſtate of the Sheepfold, committed to their Charge. Theſe are thoſe Paſtors, who ſhear the Wool, and feed on the fatteſt of the Flock; but have little or no concern for the Salvation of their Souls, ſo they may but glut and ſatisfie their Covetouſneſs and Ambition.

Loredano, a Noble *Venetian*, ſo famous in *Italy* for his witty and curious Compoſitions, writing to *Almorò Grimani* at *Verona*, to recommend to him a Preacher of his Acquaintance, expreſt himſelf in his Letter to him in theſe words; *Sene viene in coteſta Città il Padre Fra.* Girolamo Olivi, *a far pompa d'Elequenza nel corſo Quadrageſimale*; *The Father* Jerome Olivi *goes to* Verona, *to make a pompous ſhow of his Eloquence during* Lent. He ſaith not, That this Monk goes to preach the Goſpel,

Gospel, or to strive to gain Souls to Jesus Christ; but saith, *That he goes to make a show of his Eloquence*; in which words he very fully expresseth the Motive that puts these Monks upon preaching.

I have no words, Sir, to express to you the Cabals, Intriegues, Sollicitations, and Intercessions that are made to get into the best Pulpits; that is to say, those where the most Mony or Honour is to be got. They interpose the Favour of Grandees and Princes, to assure themselves of them, and that four or five years before they become vacant. There are some of these Pulpits, that are worth to the preacher, for an *Advent* and *Lent*, four hundred, five hundred, and six hundred Crowns; yea, some of them a thousand and more, without reckoning the share of the Alms given to the Poor. As for those, from whence there is no great profit to be expected, the press is not so great; and as for the poor Parishes in the Countries, where nothing at all is to be had, there is not a Monk to be found that will bestow so much as one Sermon upon them.

They have ordinarily no preaching in *Italy*, save only during *Advent* and *Lent*: On all other Feasts and Sundays of the year they have no Sermons at the Parishes; and instead thereof they only sing an High-Mass in Musick; but the Word of God is not preached at all in them. Yet in some Convents of Monks they have Sermons in the Afternoon; but these are Sermons peculiar to the Order of which the Monks are, and always on

the ſame ſubject. The *Dominicans* preach eternally on the *Roſary*; the *Carmelites* on the *Scapulary*; the *Franciſcans* on the *Rope* of S. *Francis*; and the *Soccolanti* have for their ſubject S. *Anthony* of *Padua*. True it is, that theſe Matters are of themſelves very dry and barren, and I am aſtoniſhed how they can continually make them yield ſomething to talk of. One great help indeed they have, which is, that the greateſt part of their Sermons is made up of a Relation of Miracles, which a Preacher of good Invention may almoſt with as much eaſe coin, as utter.

The *Jeſuits* alſo have erected in their Houſes Congregations, which they denominate from the *Bleſſed Virgin*, where they preach all Sundays and Holy-days: And to the end they may have at all, and draw to them all ſorts of people, they make a diſtinction of Perſons; they have one Congregation for Artizans and Handycraft-men, another for Scholars, a third for Merchants, and a fourth for Gentlemen and Noblemen. They have alſo Set-days on which they preach in their Churches, to prepare people to die well: They have very happily poſſeſt themſelves of this Poſt; for it is exceeding gainful and profitable to them. Upon this ſcore it is, that they are ſent for to Exhort the ſick, and ſuch as lie at the point of death; which is the moſt proper time, and faireſt occaſion for them to get themſelves put into their laſt Wills.

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There is yet another sort of Preachers in *Italy*, which I never saw in any other parts, where the Popish Religion is profest: These Preachers are call'd, *Preachers of the Place*. To give you a more distinct Idea hereof, you must know, Sir, that in the great Cities of *Italy*, towards Evening, when the great heat of the day is past, the *Italians* (of what Rank or Quality soever they be) go and take a walk in the *Piazza*: Here it is they give Audience, and discourse about their Business. If any has a mind to meet with any person about that Time, the first thing he does, is to go and look for him at the Place. Here you are sure always to meet with a great number of Ballad-singers, Jugglers, Mountebanks, Fortune-Tellers, and other such like; who find their greatest profit amongst the greatest Crowds: And the People do not fail to get about them, for their Diversion and Recreation; and amongst these, you meet with more Priests and Monks, than Lay-men; for after they have discharg'd themselves of their Masses in the morning, there are none more idle than they all the rest of the day. No sooner are the Mountebanks got up to their Stage, but at the same time (by what motive or zeal I know not) a Monk, with a great Crucifix carried before him, with a little Bell they ring, to give Notice of his coming, mounts a portative Pulpit, prepared for him in one of the corners of the Place, opposite to the Theatre of the Rope-Dancers, and there begins to preach; a multitude of people running from all parts to hear him.

When I first saw this, I was extreamly edified, to see such crowds of people leave these Actors and Rope-Dancers to hear a Sermon; but drawing near my self to hear the Discourse, I found that these Preachers were better qualified to make the people laugh by their pleasant Discourse and Mimical Gesture, than the *Merry-Andrews* of the stage. The Mountebanks play the Fool on their Stages; and they, the Buffoons and Drolls in their Pulpits. Whilst those use their utmost Effort to sell their Drugs; these make a quest in the place, which goes in the Name of *Being for the Poor*, whom they recommend with a great deal of Zeal and Earnestness to their Hearers; tho' indeed all the Mony they gather comes into their own Pockets. I chanced once to be in the Company of some Monks, who impudently did aver, That these Sermons in the *Piazza's*, were a manifest proof of the Truth of the Religion at *Rome* against the Heretricks, because in them there was a visible Accomplishment of that Oracle of the Holy Ghost, which we find in the first Chapter of the *Proverbs*, where it is said, that *Wisdom cries in the Publick places*; and that this was only to be found amongst the *Roman Catholicks*, where *Wisdom*, that is, *The Word of God*, made it self to be heard in Publick, by means of these Preachers of the places.

To tell you my thoughts, Sir, I am fully perswaded, that if *Wisdom* do indeed cry there, it is for Vengeance upon the horrid abuse and affront done to his Gospel, which is there ridicul'd and made the subject of their Drollery, to make people

laugh. Neither can it be ſaid, That *Wiſdom* cauſeth her Voice to be heard there, with reſpect to the perſons of the Preachers, the moſt of them being Monks of the moſt bebauch'd and profligate Lives. I knew one of them at *Venice* that was a moſt wicked Wretch, who no ſooner got out of the Pulpit, but went and ſpent the Mony he had got at his Queſt, in infamous places, upon Whores.

The *Roman Catholicks* are at a loſs, whither to betake themſelves for viſible ſigns of the Truth of their Church. They produce ſome others every whit as pitiful as that now mention'd, amongſt which they reckon a certain Cuſtom introduc'd in *Italy*, to make little Children preach publickly in their Churches, from *Chriſtmaſs* to *Twelf-tide*. They take pretty Children of about three or four years of Age, and they make them get by heart ſome ſhort Sermons upon the Birth of our Saviour, which may laſt about a quarter of an hour; they ſpend much time to exerciſe them in the utterance of them with a good Grace; and on *Chriſtmaſs-day* they preach them, before the *Mangers* that are prepared in all Churches at that time. Theſe little Children obſerve all the Ceremonies of Preachers: They begin with their *Ave Maria*, then proceed to a ſhort Introduction, and afterwards to a Diviſion. As ſoon as they have made an end of their firſt Part they make a Queſt, and all their Auditors give them ſomething. This done, they preach for the Souls in *Purgatory*. No ſooner has one of them made an end of his Sermon, but another takes his place, and begins: And thus

they continue till *Twelfth-tide*. They begin early in the morning, and don't make an end till far in the Night. The Mony they get at their Queſts, ſerves them afterwards to make a Collation with, and to buy them Sweet-meats, or other Junkets. Thus it is they educate and acquitom theſe young Lions betimes to the prey, to the end (when they are grown up to be great Preachers) they may be expert at devouring the Alms, which are given to the poor only.

Now all this petty Intriegue is produc'd by the *Italians*, as a mark forſooth of the Truth or their Religion, applying it to that Verſe of the Pſalmiſt, *Ex ore Infantium & Lactentium perfeciſti Laudem*; *Thou haſt* (according to their Explication of it) *perfected the work of preaching out of the mouth of Infants*. They ſay that this is no where to be found, ſave only in their Church. This gives me an occaſion to ſpeak to you of that ſignal Mark of their Church, of which they boaſt ſo much, and which with ſo much vehemence they object to the Proteſtants, *viz.* the Miſſion of their Evangelical Preachers, which they ſend into Foreign Countries, and of which number are all thoſe wretched Jeſuits that come for *England*; and of whom I doubt not but there be great numbers ſtill in that Kingdom. This I can aſſure you, That ſhould the Jeſuits of *Italy*, and other Countries of the *Roman Communion* ſend thither their Miſſionaries, proportionably to the Mony that is given them for this purpoſe, all the Fathers of that Order would not be ſufficient to ſupply the places. It is impoſſible to imagine the immenſe Sums are given

given them upon this account: This is their great pretence, in the frequent Visits they make to the Palaces of the great Ones, as well as to the Houses of Widows and rich Men, to induce them to contribute to so holy a Work. And after all, they content themselves with sending only a certain number of their Jesuits, whom they provide for, employing the rest of the Mony in building those stately Houses, or rather those sumptuous Palaces for themselves as they do, (for they will not have them call'd *Monasteries* or *Convents*) and with the same Mony they proportionably increase the Rents and Incoms thereof. A poor *Capuchin*, who goes about begging an Alms, is very well content, if he gets but wherewith to fill his hungry Belly; but the pretext of the Jesuits is far more specious, 'tis for the *Conversion of Souls*, and one must open wide ones Purse strings to them, *ad majorem Dei gloriam*; *for the greater Glory of God*; else they are not well satisfied. In the mean time we see with our Eyes the work they make in *England*, insomuch as their Name is become execrable and abominable; not so much for their earnest application to convert, or rather to pervert Souls, as for the Intriegues they carry on to trouble the publick Peace: For finding it impossible to persuade people by the weakness of their pitiful Arguments, they endeavour to put a whole Kingdom into Combustion, and to set *Protestants* together by the Ears, to the end, that having by their mutual Animosities and Quarrels, plentifully drawn blood from each other, some *Catholick Prince* may afterwards

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ſubdue them the more eaſily; and ſo bring about that by the Sword, which it was impoſſible for them to do by their Reaſons.

This is that I was told by a Jeſuit of *Milan*, about four years ſince: *Our Reverend Fathers, the Jeſuits in* England (ſaid he) *write to us, That the* Engliſh *are exceeding obſtinate in perſiſting in their Hereſie; and that the only way of Converting them, is totally to exterminate and root them out. Thus is that therefore* (continued he) *for which our Fathers do inceſſantly labour; and we hope within a ſhort time to ſee, that God has bleſt their Endeavours with an anſwerable ſucceſs.* Indeed, when I arrived at *London*, about two years and an half ago, the Jeſuits were become exceſſively inſolent. Being once occaſionly got into Diſpute with them, and finding themſelves pinch'd, without being able to anſwer, they began to put it off with Railery; and telling me, *That all my fine Reaſonings would not hinder me from being damn'd at laſt.* Another of them more cunning, and very probably more malicious too, told me, *That he had at his Lodging ſome invincible Arguments ſet down in writing, and if I would take the pains to come thither, he would eaſily anſwer all the Objections I had made againſt him.* But I had a care of truſting ſo honeſt a Man, and I contented my ſelf with telling him, *That he would do well to go and fetch his Papers, or to appoint another place for me to meet him, than at his own Lodging.* But I found him Deaf of that Ear. Soon after, I perceiv'd the Jeſuits had form'd a Deſign,

Design, to make me leave *London*; and to this purpose, because they could not do it openly by Force, and for that they found me always upon my Guard, they sent out a great number of *Rogues* and *Cut-throats* to dog me, who follow'd me every where, to have an occasion to do me some Mischief; but forasmuch as I never went abroad at Night, these good Missionaries fail'd of executing their Design; and the happy Revolution, that happened soon after, oblig'd them to cast their thoughts another way.

One thing here is remarkable, which is, That we do not find the Jesuits so zealous to go to other *Protestant Countries*, as they are to come for *England*; for we meet with but very few of them in *Switzerland* or *Germany*; the reason is, Because *England* is furnish'd with a Charm that is irresistible for them; 'tis a Country well stor'd with Mony, and could they but once wriggle in themselves to be the Confessors and Directors of all the English Ladies, it would be a very pleasing Employment for them. Besides, it is well known what kind of Life they lead here, and that it is nothing less than a *Penitential way of Living*, as they would make others believe. Wherefore I cannot see how their Mission can be an infallible Mark of the Truth of the *Roman Religion*, as the Papists pretend: But sure I am that this Mark (if there must be any at this time) may with greater Justice be attributed to those zealous *Protestant Ministers*, who having already suffered Imprisonment and Banishment for the Defence of the Gospel,

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are privately return'd to *France*, in the greateſt heat of the *Perſecution*, and betakes themſelves to thoſe Provinces where they were altogether unknown, for to ſtrengthen and encourage their Brethren, to perſevere in the profeſſion of the Truth, and to endeavour to raiſe up thoſe again, who by their Frailty had renounced it. Here, to be ſure, were no Temporal Advantages for them to hope for; and they could eaſily be aſſur'd, That in caſe they were taken in the Fact, they would be ſent to the Gallies, or condemn'd to Death, as hath hapned to many of them.

But as for the Jeſuits, they are ſo well perſuaded that they are never like to ſuffer any thing here in *England*, upon the account of their Religion, that notwithſtanding all the Acts of Parliament, which are only level'd to prevent their wicked Deſigns, they ſtill continue here very freely and openly: and yet when they are got home, they will not be wanting to publiſh every where, as it is their cuſtom to do, That they have been perſecuted, clapt up in Priſon, tormented, and had certainly been put to death, had not the Interceſſion of the *Bleſſed Virgin*, or of ſome Saint to whom they have devoted themſelves, moſt miraculouſly deliver'd them.

But 'tis time I return again to *Italy*, where I find yet another ſort of Miſſionaries, which are not to be employ'd in Forein Countries, but in *Italy* it ſelf: Theſe are all Monks, ſometimes of one, and ſometimes of another Order; but moſtly *Capuchins*, and yet more ordinarily a certain ſort of Fryers, which

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are call'd, *The Fathers of the Miſſion*: Theſe, after they have furniſh'd themſelves with a good ſtock of Sermons upon different Subjects, they ſend to *Rome*, and demand a Miſſion from the Pope; that is, Leave to go and preach their Sermons in certain Towns and Provinces, with all the *Indulgences* and power to *Abſolve* in, reſerved; as is cuſtomarily granted on like occaſions.

The firſt I ever ſaw of this ſort was at *Monteſiaſcone*, two days Journy and an half from *Rome*. Theſe were *Capuchins*, who beſides their Habit, which was very odd and antick, with their great Beards, they had on their Heads great red *Calots*, or cloſe Caps, to ſignifie their Zeal, and the red-hot ardour of their Charity for the *Converſion of Souls*: For this (if we will believe them) is yet another Mark of the True Church; For even as the *Holy Ghoſt* did viſibly deſcend on the Heads of the Apoſtles in the form of *Fiery Tongues*, ſo there are to this day found thoſe Heads in the Church of *Rome*, whom the *Fire of Scarlet* diſtinguiſheth from others; and that this alſo is the Reaſon why the *Cardinals*, who are all Divine Love, (or to ſpeak more truly, who ought to be ſo) wear red Hats, and the *Pope*, a Cap of the ſame colour. Well, to return to my *red Caps*, I had the curioſity to go and hear them preach; I entred the Church where I ſaw one of them in the Pulpit, with a great Rope or Cord about his Neck, and a great Crucifix in his Arms, who did his utmoſt endeavour, to excite ſenſible Affections in the hearts of his Auditors. The chief Aim of theſe *Preachers*,

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is, to make the people weep; if they can once effect this, they are happy, and this is all they desire; for this procures them the Reputation of being great Missionaries, and Men of a true Apostolick Spirit. To this end they make use of the most tender, melting, and affectionate Expressions they can think of, to draw Tears from their Hearers.

The Preacher I heard at this time, was paraphrasing the History of the Passion of our Saviour; and after he had employ'd his utmost skill, in setting forth our Saviour as the most lovely and beautiful of all Men: He on the other hand represented those pitiless Tormentors, who with great Cords tied his fair Hands, white as the driven Snow, and beat his lovely Countenance, where the Lilly and the Rose did urge for mastety. He added to all these Expressions a most lamentable and affecting Tone, with Gestures very proper, and according to the Subject; whereby I perceiv'd that this Father was an excellent Declaimer. When on a sudden some good Women, wholly melted into Tenderness and Compassion (as were those Women of *Jerusalem*, who wept seeing Jesus Christ carrying his Cross up to Mount *Calvary*, and whom our Saviour bade not to weep for him, but for themselves) caus'd their sighs to be heard aloud; and a few Minutes after, all that Quarter where the Women sat being all in Tears, the Emotion soon caught amongst the Men also; so that the whole Church was fill'd with groans, sighs, and sobs. Whereupon the *Capuchin* resolv'd to prosecute his Conquest,

queſt, caſt himſelf down upon his Knees, and fixing his great Crucifix upon the Pulpit, he lifted up both his hands to Heaven; and with a mournful and terrible voice, twiſting the Cord about his Neck, as if he had a mind to ſtrangle himſelf, he cried out *Mercy, Mercy*; and continued in the ſame manner, to repeat the ſame word about forty or fifty times, till he made all his Auditory cry ſo after him. Then there was a moſt dreadful Noiſe heard in the Church, which continued for a good quarter of an hour, till their breaths being ſpent, the Noiſe began to leſſen by degrees, and at laſt ended in a great ſilence; which gave occaſion to the Father to reſume his Diſcourſe, which he continued with the ſame tender Affections to the end.

I don't pretend in the leaſt to blame here the ſenſibleneſs and tenderneſs of mens hearts with reſpect to our Saviour's Paſſion; I am ſo far from that, that I wiſh it were in my power to make a moſt deep impreſſion thereof in the hearts of all men: But withal, this ſhall never hinder me from averring, That theſe Affections do ordinarily paſs away like Lightning; and that good ſolid Motives laid down in a Sermon, to engage people to a truly Chriſtian Life, make a longer ſtay in a man's mind, and are there ready upon occaſions to move the Will; and this is that which theſe Miſſionaries wholly neglect. Accordingly we don't find, that the *Italians* (after all theſe Miſſions) are ever a whit the better men. At the end of three weeks or a month, which commonly is the term of theſe Miſſions,

Miſſions, they go with a great deal of Solemnity and plant a great Croſs of Wood of about thirty or forty foot high, on ſome eminent place near the Cities where the Miſſion has been diſcharg'd, *ad perpetuam rei memoriam.* This Action is perform'd with a great deal of Ceremony and Superſtition; thither they repair all, and Worſhip barefooted, and Cords about their Necks; and here it is the Preacher concludes and ſeals his Miſſion, in giving the people a grand *Benediction*, and all the *Indulgences* the Pope has afforded him.

It was once my hap to meet with ſome *Miſſionaries* on Mount *Apennine*, who came from preaching in a City belonging to the County of *Urbain*. A luſty young man, who had been their Guide for ſeven or eight Miles together, and who had carried them on his ſhoulders over a Brook, declar'd, That he had never found any thing more light than they were, and that he thought that they weighed no more than a Feather. The Hoſteſs, at whoſe Houſe they had lodg'd, anſwer'd ſmiling, *That that Miracle did ſurprize her the more, becauſe ſhe had given them a good Dinner juſt before their going away; and if there were nothing, but what they had eaten, they muſt needs weigh ſomething.* The place where I met them was at another Inn, where they notwithſtanding caus'd a ſecond Dinner to be prepar'd for them. By this I perceiv'd, that all theſe zealous *Miſſionaries*, with their Ropes about their Necks, are not always the greateſt Lovers of Penance, herein reſembling the *Phariſees*, who tho' they carried the

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Commandments of the Law written on their Foreheads, yet were not the ſtricteſt Obſervators of it. And yet it is to theſe kind of Miſſionaries, the *Roman Catholicks* aſſure us, That the Gift of *Preaching* is particularly communicated by the *Holy Ghoſt*, in the particular diſpenſation and diviſion of his Graces and Gifts. For my part, I ſhould rather believe, That this excellent Priviledge does in the firſt place belong to the Biſhops and Miniſters of the Churches; theſe are the true Paſtors, whom the Sheep are to hear. Indeed we may ſay in one ſenſe, That the Miniſtry of Preaching is quite ceaſed in *Italy*, where they hear in a manner nothing elſe but the voice of Strangers; I mean, of a vaſt number of miſerable Monks, who are not Curates of Churches.

I have already mention'd in one of my LETTERS, That during the ſpace of ſeven years that I liv'd there, I never heard any man preach that had Eccleſiaſtical Authority; that is to ſay, who was either Curate or Biſhop, except only Cardinal *Viſconti*, Archbiſhop of *Milan*, whoſe cuſtom was to preach on the four principal Feaſts or Holy days of the year in his own Cathedral. And yet herein alſo I found a great inconvenience; for this Cardinal Archbiſhop, that he might preach with the greater magnificence, and probably alſo by a motive of Vain-glory, would not permit any Sermon to be preach'd that day, neither in the Morning nor Afternoon; and this in *Milan*, which is a very great City, and full of people. The Church indeed is very ſpacious, but yet I don't believe it can

contein the fiftieth part of the Inhabitants, at ſuch a diſtance that they may underſtand the Preacher: So that excepting only a certain number of perſons, all the reſt are deprived of Hearing the Word of God.

I went once to hear him preach on an *Eaſter-Day*; I could ſay indeed that I ſaw him preach, but I could not hear him, the ſound of his Voice not reaching ſo far as where I was; and becauſe of the great crowd, it was not poſſible for me to get nearer. He was magnificently apparel'd in his Pontifical Habiliments, with the Mitre on his Head; and the Pulpit of that Cathedral being very ſpacious, he had ſeveral Canons that aſſiſted on each ſide of him, likewiſe dreſt in all their moſt pompous Ornaments. Having therefore ſeen him for a good while, ſhaking his Head, and caſting abroad of his Hands, I went out of the Church, without having underſtood one word that he ſaid. And foraſmuch as I have now made mention of an *Eaſter-Day*, I cannot refrain, Sir, from giving you ſome account of a pleaſant, but yet truly deteſtable and abominable Cuſtom, which takes place on *Eaſter-Day* throughout all *Italy*, in reference to preaching. They tell us, That *Eaſter-Day* is a Day of Merriment and Rejoycing for Chriſtians, applying to this purpoſe that Text of the *Pſalmiſt*; *Hæc eſt dies quam fecit Dominus, exultemus & lætemur in ea*; *This is the Day which the Lord hath made, let us be glad and rejoyce therein.* And indeed it is ſuch a Day; but in another ſenſe than they take it. Wherefore, to make the people, merry

merry, all the preachers on that Day (how grave or ſerious ſoever they be) muſt play the merry *Andrews* in their Pulpits, and act a kind of Comedy, that the people may hear the preacher with the greater pleaſure and ſatisfaction. The Sermon that is us'd to be preach'd, during *Lent* time, in the Morning, is on *Eaſter-Day* made in the Afternoon; becauſe (as the Latin Proverb hath it) *Venter jejunus non delectatur Muſicâ*; *An hungry Belly takes no pleaſure in Muſick.* The word *Hallelujah* is a common Text to all the Preachers on that Day, which Word in its proper ſignification is as much as to ſay, *Praiſe the Lord:* But on *Eaſter-Day* (in *Italy*,) it ſignifies, *Gentlemen and Ladies, prepare your ſelves for a ſound Laughter.* After they have nam'd their Text, they enter upon Matter, and vent all the moſt ridiculous ſtuff they can think of. Theſe Sermons afterwards ſerve all the *Eaſter* time for Mirth and Paſtime in Companies, where every one takes delight in relating to others what he hath heard.

Being once on an *Eaſter-Day* in *Bononia*, I went to hear the Sermon at S. *Peter's* Church, being the Cathedral of that City, the Archbiſhop himſelf being then preſent. The Preacher was one of the Fathers *Soccolanti.* After that he had turn'd ſeveral Texts of Scripture into Ridicule, he quoted the 2*d* Verſe of the 16*th* Chapter of S. *Mark*, where it is ſaid, That the *Maries came to the Sepulchre*, Orto jam Sole, *after Sun-riſing*, as it is in the Vulgar Latin; and oppos'd this to the 1*ſt* Verſe of the 20*th* Chapter of the Goſpel of S. *John*, where it

is ſaid, That they *arriv'd very early, before it was yet day-light*; and then put the Queſtion, how it were poſſible to reconcile theſe two places, which ſeem'd to contradict one another. *For his part* (he ſaid) *he believed, That the* Maries *did not riſe till long after the Sun was riſen, and indeed till it was near Noon: For we ſee* (ſaid he) *that this goes for very early riſing with our* Italian *Ladies, who don't come to Maſs on Sundays till it be half an hour after eleven or twelve.* And hereupon he began in a Comical manner to repreſent a Womans awaking out of her ſleep; the time ſhe takes to rub her Eyes, to ſtretch her Arms, and an hundred other impertinent Follies, which put all the Church into a loud laughter. Afterwards (for this Father was very fertil of his curious Thoughts) he re-call'd himſelf, and ſaid, *That indeed the* Maries *were riſen very early in the Morning, but that they needed ſo much time to dreſs and trick up themſelves, that it was very late before they could get out of doors, which was the reaſon they could not reach the Sepulchre till after the Sun was riſen*; *Orto jam Sole.* Here he repreſented Women dreſſing of themſelves; how much time they ſpend in dreſſing their Head, in laying on of Paint, fixing their Patches, and making an hundred Faces before their Looking-Glaſſes; and expreſs'd all theſe particulars admirably well, with his Mimical Geſtures. This curious Thought he immediately back'd with another: *I cry mercy!* (ſaid he) *the* Maries *were not ſuch vain Women, as I have been juſt now a deſcribing: But they were Goſſiping-Houſwives*;

they

they roſe, and went abroad indeed betimes in the Morning, but before they could take their leaves of their Neighbours, much time was ſpent; ſo that they did not come to the Sepulchre till it was late; Orto jam Sole. Here he enlarg'd himſelf on the Tattle and Goſſiping Diſcourſe of Women, and mention'd ſuch ridiculous ſtuff amongſt it, that the Cardinal Archbiſhop, who was there, burſt out into a loud laughter. He continued his *Eaſter-Sermon* at the ſame rate, to the end of it, profaning (after a moſt heinous and unworthy manner) ſo Holy a day, and the Venerable Hiſtory of theſe holy Women, who were judg'd worthy to be the firſt Witneſſes of the greateſt Myſtery of our Faith, *viz.* The Reſurrection of our Lord JESUS CHRIST.

Another year, being at *Venice* on *Eaſter-day*, I heard a *Benedictine*, that was a *Genouſe* by Birth, who (amongſt a great many fooliſh and impertinent Stories) told this that follows, by which you may judge of the reſt: *A young Lady* (ſaid he) *being newly married, did extreamly afflict her ſelf, becauſe her Husband often told her, That he could not love her ſo well as otherwiſe he would, becauſe ſhe had not black Eyes. Whereupon ſhe went and communicated her Grief to her Confeſſor; the good Father, whom ſhe had choſen to be the Director of her Conſcience, bade her not to afflict her ſelf, and that if ſhe would but bring him all the Jewels and great Pieces of Gold which her Husband kept very charily in his Cloſet, he would by his Prayers obtain for her of God the favour of having black*

Eyes. The Lady in the earneſt deſire ſhe had of becoming more beautiful and pleaſing to her Huſband, follow'd her Confeſſor's Direction, and brought him the Jewels and Gold, according to his deſire: But her Husband miſſing them ſoon after, and perceiving by the ambiguous and uncertain Anſwers of his Wife, that ſhe muſt be guilty of the Theft, Beat her moſt outragiouſly; and to make her Confeſs, how ſhe had diſpos'd of them, made her Black and Blew all over with the Stroaks he had given her. The poor Lady in this pitiful Condition, with Tears in her Eyes, returns to her Confeſſor, to acquaint him how ill ſhe had ſped with his Advice, and to Redemand her Jewels; but the Confeſſor abſolutely refus'd to reſtore them to her, maintaining, That now they were his own, according to the Bargain and Contract made between them; foraſmuch as ſhe could not deny, but ſhe had obtain'd her Deſire, and got Black Eyes with a Vengeance as indeed they were with the Stroaks and Bruiſes her Husband had given her.

What think you, Sir, was not this a pretty Story, to be told from a Pulpit on *Eaſter-Day*? It being moreover very probable, that this was only an invented Tale. Thus theſe wretched Monks, inſtead of diſpenſing the Word of Truth to the people, ordinarily feed them with nothing but Lies.

I ſuppoſe, Sir, you will not take it ill, if I venture upon another ſhort Digreſſion, referring to another pleaſant Cuſtom obſerv'd in *Italy*, *viz.* that of bleſſing *Eggs* at *Eaſter*, which are of great

virtue

virtue to ſanctifie both ſoul and body. On *Eaſter-Eve* and *Eaſter-Day*, all the Heads of Families ſend great Chargers full of hard Eggs to the Church, to get them bleſſed, which the Prieſts perform by ſaying ſeveral appointed Prayers, and making great ſigns of the Croſs over them, and ſprinkling them with Holy-water. The Prieſt having finiſh'd the Ceremony, demands, how many dozen Eggs there be in every Baſon? to the end he may know, how many of them came to his ſhare; and ſometimes are ſo honeſt as to take Three or Four out of every Dozen, eſpecially when they know the perſons that ſend them to be wealthy. There be ſome of the poorer ſort, who are apt to cry, when they ſee the Prieſt take more than his due, or pick out the faireſt or greateſt of them. Theſe bleſt Eggs have the virtue of ſanctifying the Entrails of the Body, and are to be the firſt fat or fleſhy nouriſhment they take after the Abſtinence of *Lent*. The *Italians* do not only abſtain from Fleſh during *Lent*, but alſo from Eggs, Cheeſe, Butter, and all white Meats. As ſoon as the Eggs are bleſſed, every one carries his portion home, and cauſeth a large Table to be ſet in the beſt Room they have in the Houſe, which they cover with their beſt Linnen, all beſtrew'd with Flowers; and place round about it a dozen Diſhes of Meat, and the great Charger of Eggs in the midſt. 'Tis a very pleaſant ſight to ſee theſe Tables ſet forth in the Houſes of Great Perſons, where they expoſe on Side-board Tables (round about the Chamber) all the Plate they have in the Houſe,

and whatsoever else they have that is rich and curious, in honour to their *Easter* Eggs, which of themselves yield a very fair show; for the shells of them are all painted with divers colours and gilt. Sometimes there are no less than twenty dozen in the same Charger, neatly laid together in form of a Pyramid. The Table continues in the same posture cover'd all the *Easter-week*, and all those that come to visit them within that time, are invited to eat an *Easter* Egg with them; which they must not refuse.

I return now again to my Sermons, upon which Subject I have this only further to add, That there is yet another sort of Preachers, who only preach before the Nuns Grates. These are finnical Preachers, of a sweet Countenance, and commonly all of them handsom young Monks: For except Beauty and Sweetness do meet in a Preacher, the Nuns, who have the Choice of them, will have none of him. All the study of these men is, to find out pretty words, and the most tender and affectionate Expressions, and frequently to enlarge themselves in praise of the Nuns, to whom they preach. I have heard many of these sorts of Preachers, and amongst the rest a young Monk at *Milan*, Preacher to the *Benedictine* Nuns of the Monastery call'd the *Maggiore*. Scarcely could this Monk speak three words together without some expression of the high value and love he had for them: *My most dear and lovely Sisters, whom I love from the deepest bottom of my heart*, said he, which was almost the constant Appendix of every Sentence

Sentence he utter'd: So that having recollected all his Sermon with my ſelf, I found that the upſhot (in a manner) of all that he had ſaid, was, *That he loved them the moſt tenderly and affectionately that could be.* When once a *Monk* has the good hap to become a Preacher to the Nuns, and that he is lik'd of by them, he may promiſe himſelf an happy time of it ever after, and that he ſhall ſpend the reſt of his days in a voluptuous delicacy and tenderneſs: For the Nuns have nothing ſo much upon their hearts, as to procure all manner of eaſe to their Directors and Preachers, to the end, to make them the more indulgent towards them. They allow them great Penſions every year; they provide them with Linnen, and furniſh them with dry and wet Sweet-meats, and ſend them every day a diſh of what they judge moſt pleaſing and delicate, which they call the *Preachers-Diſh.* So that indeed it is no difficult thing for theſe handſom Monks to declare from their Pulpits the extraordinary Love they have for their tender Nurſes, and to be ſo laviſh in their praiſing of them.

This way of praiſing others from the Pulpit, puts me in mind of another cuſtom the Monks have introduc'd, to praiſe one another publickly on certain days of the year, which is commoly the Feaſt of their Bleſſed Founders. Thus, for example, on the Feaſt of S. *Ignatius de Loyola*, Founder of the Order of the *Jeſuits*, they make the Panegyrick of that Saint in all their Churches; and after having enlarg'd themſelves in the praiſe of their Patriarchs, they proceed to that of his Children

Children and Diſciples, that is, all thoſe that follow his Rule, and more particularly of the Fathers of that Convent where the Sermon is preach'd. But foraſmuch as according to the common Proverb, *Proprio Laus ſordet in Ore*; *That it is a baſe thing to praiſe ones ſelf*; they employ a Religious of ſome other Order to preach in their Churches on that day. It is a thing but too notorious, That the Monks do mortally hate one another; however, the deſire of being prais'd themſelves in their turn, prevailing beyond their hatred, makes them to undertake theſe otherwiſe unpleaſing Panegyricks. The *Dominicans* do publickly praiſe the *Jeſuits*, and the *Jeſuits* the *Dominicans*; and ſo for the reſt. They all agree, that theſe are the moſt difficult Sermons of all others, and that rarely one comes off with Credit and Applauſe, partly by reaſon of the too inſatiable deſire of the One party, to be prais'd beyond meaſure; and partly becauſe it goes againſt the grain with the Other, to praiſe them, which makes one in the midſt of their Encomiums to diſcover ſomething of force and conſtraint, that evidenceth the falſneſs of them. Indeed, how is it poſſible to praiſe thoſe heartily, whoſe hearts one wiſheth out of their bodies?

A *Cordelier* preaching the day of S. *Francis Xavier*, in the Church of S. *Lucia*, belonging to the Father *Jeſuits* of *Bononia*, praiſed them very pleaſantly, attributing Elogies to them, diametrically oppoſite to their known qualities and practice. *Do you ſee* (ſaid he) *the Reverend Fathers the* Jeſuits *of this Houſe, they are the beſt men that*

live

live on the Earth: They are as modeſt as Angels, They never open their Eyes, to caſt a Look upon the Ladies at Church: They are ſuch extraordinary Lovers of Retirement, that one never ſees them in the Streets: They are ſo in love with Poverty, that they deſpiſe and trample on all the Riches of the World; they never come near Dying-perſons or Widows, to importune them to be remembred in their Laſt Wills; they never concern themſelves in making up of Marriages: They never go to Complement the Cardinal Legat, or the Cardinal Arch-Biſhop. And in this manner he ran over every particular of their Behaviour and conduct. All that were in the Church laugh'd at this pretty way of commending them, the *Cordelier* had lighted on; but the *Jeſuits* were gall'd to the heart, and put to the utmoſt confuſion. The *Cordelier* having ended his Sermon, came down from the Pulpit; and inſtead of going to the *Jeſuits* Convent, there to be entertain'd, (according to the cuſtom of Preachers in the like caſe) he went directly to the Gate; it ſeems, he fear'd their giving of him the Laſh, and (I ſuppoſe) that to avoid their Revenge, he never afterwards would appear in the City *Bononia*.

This, Sir, is the Subſtance of what I had to write to you, concerning the manner of preaching, and behaviour of the Preachers in *Italy*. It remains now, that I ſhould oppoſe to them, the way of preaching us'd by our *Proteſtant Miniſters*, and their profound and ſolid Sermons; but leſt you ſhould accuſe me of being too laviſh in praiſing my own Part, I ſhall at preſent content my ſelf

with

with telling you, *That they declare to the People the Word of God with a great deal of modesty and reverence; and what is the chiefest of all, they always keep close to the Truth and Purity of the Gospel,* in the which I desire to live and die. I wish you the same Grace, and am, Sir, with all my heart,

Your most humble Servant, &c.

The

The Seventh LETTER,

Of the Proceſſions of Italy, &c.

SIR,

HAving paſſed the *Lent* time at *Rome*, I departed thence ſome Weeks after *Eaſter*, with an intent of returning to *France*. I took my Journy through that part of the Great Duke of *Tuſcany*'s Country, which borders upon the Patrimony of S. *Peter*, or the Popes Dominions. The Entrance into the Dukes Territories, is by *Il rè de Caphani*; which is a very high Mountain, ſurrounded with many great Woods, and is a very proper place for Hunting; where I ſaw ſeveral Cardinals, who diverted themſelves at that Sport. From hence 'tis two ſmall days Journy to *Sienna*; in my way thither I met with nothing but Proceſſions all along the Road. 'Tis an ancient Cuſtom eſtabliſhed in the *Roman Church*, to celebrate frequent Proceſſions after *Eaſter*, which they call *Rogations*, in order to implore the Bleſſing of God upon the Fruits of the Earth. The year wherein I took this Journy, there was a more preſſing need of it than ordinary, becauſe of the great Drought which threatned a Scarcity.

A *Proceſſion*, according to the definition of the Papiſts, is, *A walking, or marching of people from one Church to another, under the conduct of the Prieſts, aſſiſting with the Croſs and Banner, there to invoke, by the interceſſion of ſome he or ſhe Saint, the extraordinary Aſſiſtance of God.* Theſe Proceſſions are ſometimes two or three days a marching before they come to the place deſign'd; and when they have once diſpatch'd the ſinging of their *Litanies*, they play the Fools as much as the Pilgrims in their pilgrimaging do, according to the Account I have already given you in a former LETTER: So that I wanted no Divertiſement all the way from the *Rè de Cophani*, till I came to *Sienna*, whither all theſe Proceſſions were going. Only I found great Inconvenience when I came to my Inn; becauſe that wherever theſe *Proceſſions* paſs, they cauſe great Scarcity, by reaſon of the great Numbers that compoſe them. Being come to *Sienna*, I enquir'd what Church it was to which all theſe Devotions were deſign'd; and was told, That they all went to a Church of our Lady, where they had lately uncover'd a miraculous Image of the *Virgin*; which was only done at the end of every Forty years. My curioſity invited me to take a view of it; but the Throng of the people was ſo great, that I had much ado to crowd into the Church. They told me, *That this thronging Concourſe had already continued for eight days*, (for ſo long the Image had been unveiled) *and that after eight days more, it was to be veiled again with a great deal of ſolemnity.*

I took an exact view of this Image, which was about a Foot broad, and a Foot and an half high, the countenance of it repreſenting that of a very young Girl; neither could I find any thing extraordinary in it, for which it might ſeem to deſerve the Adorations they gave it. I enquir'd of the Prieſts that ſerved this Church, *What might be the reaſon that this Image was only unveiled once every forty years?* But they could give me no better than this, *That it had been a cuſtom obſerv'd time out of mind; and that they believ'd the firſt Riſe of it was an Order given by the Virgin her ſelf for ſo doing.*

I have in *Italy* ſeen a vaſt number of theſe ſorts of veiled Images; not only of the Virgin, but alſo of the Crucifix, and all other Saints; and I can ſay with truth, That there is ſcarcely a Church to be met with which hath not two or three of them. Sometimes we meet with great Pictures in their Churches, where ſeveral Saints are repreſented, and amongſt them one only having his or her face veiled, that being the myſterious Saint. The ſecret of which Intriegue, as far as I could pierce into, by the uſe the *Prieſts* and *Monks* make of it, is plainly this: They find this way admirably well ſuited to advance their Temporal profit. The things we ſee every day, become too common with us, and make little or no Impreſſion, by reaſon of the cuſtomarineſs of them on our imagination. There be ſome parts of the World, where they have ſix Months of Night, and ſix Months of day; ſo that their whole Year conſiſts but of a Day and

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a Night. Now we are told, That the Inhabitants of these Countries, assemble themselves in Crowds to see the Sun rise; whereas in these Lands where the Sun riseth every day, we don't find people concern themselves to be present at his rising; and by a parity of Reason we may conclude, That the Images and Statues of the Church of *Rome*, would make no great impression on the minds of the people, or be powerful enough to induce the opening of their Purse-strings, if the Priests had not found out this ingenious invention of making them more rare, and therefore the more desired. Yea, it seems also, that the long time of their veiling, begets something of a greater veneration for them, and that the *Roman Catholicks* imagin, That when after so long a time they are uncovered, they meet with in those Pictures, Images, and Statues, something more August and Divine than ordinary. In a word, They do all believe, and take it for granted, that when these are unveiled here on Earth, the Saints whom they represent, become more liberal in Heaven, and more favourably inclin'd to grant their Vows and Prayers. Thus you see whither Superstition, or rather Folly will run, when those who ought to be the most Zealous to overthrow it, I mean the Clergy, are the chief contrivers of ways and methods to foster and encourage it. The profit which from hence accrues to the Priests is very great, as you will be able to conceive from what I shall tell you of this our Lady of *Sienna*.

I

I spent nine or ten days in this City, and so had the leisure frequently to visit this Church of the *Virgin*, I confess, I cannot give you an exact account of the Presents I saw there offer'd; and therefore shall content my self to tell you, That I do not believe any single person entred the Church without giving something very considerable. And to encourage the people the more in their Liberality, to exceed and outstrip one another, the Priests had the cunning to prepare a place Rail'd-in with Balisters, near to the Altar of the *Virgin*; where they expos'd to view part of the Presents the people had offer'd. Here were to be seen a vast quantity of whole pieces of Cloath and fine Linnen, Handkerchiefs, Shifts, many rich Jewels, and in particular, a prodigious number of great Tapers of white Virgin-Wax, whereof some of them could weigh no less than Fifty pounds apiece, the least of them being about four or five pound each, with the Names of the Donors upon them. As for the Mony that was given, I suppose the Priests put that into their pockets, parting it among themselves; for tho' the people were continually pouring in Mony into the Basons, yet some Hours after they were seen all empty. Some *Spanish Priests*, that were travelling homewards, having presented themselves to say Mass in the said Church, whilst they were in the *Sextry*, had Rings presented to them by some of the Country Gentry, who supposed them to be Priests belonging to that Church; and had desired them, to get them fastned to some particular Picture; but they

conceiv'd it more convenient, to put them into their own Pockets, and being got out of the Church, prosecuted their Journy with a great deal of Chearfulness for the Booty they had so happily lighted on: One of them said merrily, *That he found no Scruple in himself at all, for having committed this lawful piece of Robbery, as being in much more want than the Image of the* Virgin, *who had no need either to eat or drink, as he had.*

The following Sunday, all the Inhabitants of *Sienna* and Neighbouring places met together in different Bodies, according as they were distinguish'd by their Trades and Callings; and all of them together made a great Procession to the Church of *Our Lady*, every Company marching under its own Cross and Banner, different from the rest, as under their proper Standard. The *Coblers*, as being Inferiour to all the rest, went first of all; the Arms pourtray'd on their Banner were two *Awls* plac'd Salter-wise; These were follow'd by the *Shoemakers*; and so all the rest in their Order. After every Banner followed a Man, carrying a great Wax-Taper, which was that of the Company, being all Gilt, and adorn'd with Ribands and Flowers, with a great Scutcheon upon it. Besides which, every Member of each Society or Company (which the *Italians* call *Scuole*) had their own Tapers of about Three or Four pounds apiece. After the Cross, Banner, and Taper, came a Man in a Surplice, carrying a great Purse, fastned to the End of a fine Great Staff, curiously gilt and painted, which contain'd the Sum of Mony, that each

each Company were to present to the Image of the *Virgin*. Some of these had about Ten Crowns apiece in them, and others Twenty, more or less, according to the Ability of each Profession. In the Purse belonging to the Company of *Merchants*, there were at least Two hundred Crowns, as I was inform'd by one of the Merchants themselves.

All these Companies do not assist at these *Processions* only in their Ordinary Cloaths, as having over them great Vests of Fine Linnen, dy'd of different Colours, to distinguish the Companies one from another; these they have girt about them with curious Girdles, and upon the Breast or Arms, the Device or Scutcheon of their Society; and have besides a great Cowl, hanging down on their Backs. After the Company of *Merchants*, follow'd all the *Religious Orders* that are in that City, or Neighbouring places, which are very numerous: They marched according to their Antiquity, or Standing in the City.

'Tis on such occasions as these one may be diverted with the most pleasant variety of Extravagant Dresses, that can be imagin'd: Some are dress in Grey, others in Brown, and others again in Black, &c. and all with their Frocks and Cowls shap'd in different Fashions, the pattern of most of which they pretend to have receiv'd from no meaner a hand than that of the *Virgin*, or even God himself. Every one of these *Religious Orders* went under their own Cross and Banner, the difference only was, that their Banners were not follow'd by either Taper or Purse, they leaving

that Ceremony to the Seculars; as being very well pleas'd to see them bring plentifully to their Churches, and are not wanting to encourage them thereto, by all the devices and ways imaginable; but as for them, they take special Care the Seculars shall never be a farthing the better for them.

It would be an easie matter one would think, for the *Italians* to reflect a little on these practices, if once they were willing; but that is it which puts out their Eyes, that they are unwilling to discover the Cheat. For to speak the truth, Sir, what does hinder these Monks, that are so rich, and most of which have great Revenues belonging to them, which they so prodigally spend at Taverns and Bawdy-Houses; What hinders them, say I, from making up a Purse amongst themselves, as well as the Seculars, and to be at the Charge of a great Taper to present to the *Virgin*, as well as they; but that they do not find themselves in the Humor, to furnish other Priests with Mony; as knowing but too well, how they use to spend it? And yet, if the poor Seculars should entertain the same Thoughts of them, they would at the Tribunal of their Confession, condemn such Reflections of great Impiety and Sacriledge.

After the Monks, or Regular Clergy, follow'd the Secular Clergy, *viz.* the Priests, Curates, and Canons, who all appear'd likewise with Empty Hands. The Cardinal-Archbishop was somewhat indispos'd, who (if he had been there) I am sure he would, like all the rest, have assisted at the Ceremony without either Purse or Taper. Both

these Orders of the Clergy were followed by the Magistrates of the City, and the Officers of Justice, all in their Robes of Ceremony, with their Tapers and Purses. And last of all, the whole Procession was concluded with a company of young Gentlemen, and Sword-men.

This Procession marched on towards the Church of *Our Lady* in very good Order, at the sound of Trumpets and Drums, and the Air resounding with continual *Ora pro Nobis*. All their Wax-Tapers and Purses were left in the Church, in the hands of the Priests, by which you may guess the great Advantage they make of these Pageantries. *For* (as the *Spaniard* said very well) *the Image does not stand in need either of Meat or Drink, and none but Men can make use of the Mony, and other Presents offer'd to it.*

Two or Three days after, as Children please themselves in imitating the practices of their Elders, the Boys and Girls of the Town, assembled themselves in Companies. The School-Boys and young Girls got their Masters and Mistresses, to conduct them to *Our Ladies Church*. They made Purses of about two or three Crowns apiece; so that about two days after the Great Procession, one could scarcely walk through the Streets of *Sienna*, for the Boys had got great Cords, which they held at both ends, stretch'd out, to make all those that had a mind to pass, to give somewhat to make up their Purses. Afterwards they provided themselves with Wax-Tapers, little Crosses, and Banners, and so went by way of Procession to the

Church; where the *Priests* gave them a very kind Reception, Weeping for very Joy, to see so good Beginnings in such Tender and Young years. The Sixth Day they covered the Image with a pomp and magnificence altogether extraordinary; at which time there was a great Concourse of the Nobility and Gentry of the City and Country. The Confluence was so extraordinary, that they were forced to set a Guard at the Doors of the Church, who suffer'd none to enter, but persons of Appearance and Quality. I heard an Old Gentleman, who with a great Sense of Devotion blessed God with a Loud Voice, *That he had vouchsafed him the happiness of having seen the same Miraculous Image Two and twenty times uncover'd during his Life time.* I was somewhat surpriz'd at this Expression of his; for had it been true, That the Image (as was said) had not been uncover'd more than once in Forty years, it must have follow'd, that at that rate this Gentleman must be more Aged than *Methusalem*. But I was inform'd afterwards, That there seldom passed a Year, wherein (upon some emergency or other of publick Need requiring it) the said Image was not uncover'd. This gave me a full Notion of the Cunning of these *Priests*, who to procure the Vogue and Devotion of the People for some of their Images, do Veil them withal; declaring them to be Miraculous, and so trascendently Holy, that it is not lawful to expose them to publick and common View, more than once in several Years time, except it be upon some extraordinary emergent

emergent Necessity: And yet, as soon as they see that their Device has taken, that the Devotion of the People is kindled, and that their Profits are sure, they have not the patience themselves to stay out the time of their own prefixing, before they discover these their Lucriferous Mysteries; but they lay hold of the opportunity of the first Drought, or Wet Season; and declare, That Necessity having no Law, the Fruits of the Earth being in great danger, they are forc'd to uncover the Image sooner than they had design'd.

And thus an Image, or Statue, which according to the first Institution was not to be expos'd more than once in Forty years, is set forth almost every Year. Which proceeding of theirs is so far from being suspected by the deluded Laity, that it gains them a great deal of Reputation, and the Esteem of very good and honest Men, full of Compassion, and extreamly desirous to obviate and prevent (as far as in them lies) all publick Calamities. The *Monks* and *Priests* do both of them perfectly well agree and harmonize in this Point; for they have all of them some hidden Idol or other in their Churches, which they uncover at certain Intervals of Time, each in their due order, without interfering or clashing one with another, playing *Hodie mihi, cras tibi.*

In those Monasteries where the Abbots, Priors, and Guardians are *Triennial*, they have taken up the Custom of vouchsafing this Favour to the Publick, at their first Arrival in the Monastery, and this commonly either by exposing the Holy Sacra-

ment for three days together, or by uncovering some miraculous Image or other. Neither doth the Idol lose a whit of credit or repute for all this, because it is look'd upon as an extraordinary Occasion, and ceaseth not to pass in the Minds of the people for a Mystery not to be expos'd, but once in such an interval of years. This was the Rare Show I was entertain'd with at *Sienna*, which at present is one of the most Superstitious Cities that is in all *Italy*, and is commonly called by way of Prerogative and Excellence, *Sienna the Devout*. This City also is very famous for the Purity of her Language, the best *Italian* without contradiction being spoken here.

After that I had visited all the places of Devotion that are in it, I prosecuted my Journy, and passing a second time through *Tuscany* and *Florence*, after two great days Journy I came to *Bononia*, which is a very fine City. Formerly this place was a Commonwealth; but at present the Popes have reduc'd it to their Obedience, and have a Legat there, who commands in their Name. On the great Gate of the Legates Palace, which is a very ancient Structure, is a Statute of Stone, representing a Woman with a *Tiara*, or Tripple Papal Crown upon her Head. They of *Bononia* say, This Figure represents RELIGION; but it seems with more probability to be a Statute of Pope *Joan*: For that it is not the former appears from hence, because the principal Marks with which the Papists set forth Religion are wanting in this Statute, *viz.* a *Cross* in the one Hand, and a

Chalice

Chalice with the *Host* in the other. Two days after my arrival at *Benonia*, I went to take a view of the fair and renowned Abby of S. *Michael* in *Bosco*, situate on a pleasant Hill, about two Musquet-shot from the City. It seems to have been plac'd on that Eminence, to be seen and admir'd by all *Italy*. Above all other places, this is peculiarly famous for the curious Paintings that embellish it, *Caracche*, *Guido Rhenus*, and many other famous Painters seeming to have deposited in this Building the whole curiosity and perfection of their Art, to make it the more recommendable to Posterity. The Religious that dwell here are *Olivetan-Monks*, they profess the Rule of S. *Bennet*, and are habited in white.

As I was taking a view of the painting of the Grotto's, or of the first Cloister, which is built with right Angles, the Abbot taking a walk after Dinner with some of his Religious, by an extraordinary piece of Civility drew near to me, and took the pains himself to explain to me the Pictures, which represent some very considerable particularities of the Life of their Legislator S. *Bennet*. After which he conducted me to their Library, which is all curiously painted, and furnished with very good and fairly bound Books, and certainly is one of the neatest I have seen in *Italy*. Where being entred into Discourse concerning some of those Books, the Abbot made a proffer to me of staying in the said Abby, and teaching *Humanity* and *Rhetorick* to his Religious; telling me, *That if I thought good to accept of it, I should be*

Entertain'd

Entertain'd at his own Table, and enjoy a very Competent Allowance. Tho' at this time I had no design of staying in *Italy*, and that I was now actually engag'd in my Journy for *France*; yet this occasion so favourably presenting it self, and meeting with a strong Inclination in me, to acquire a further perfection in the *Italian* Tongue, after Two or Three days respit I had desir'd of the Abbot, to consider of it, I accepted of his Offers. He appointed me a very good Salary, and assign'd me Twelve of his young Monks for my Pupils. They were almost all of them either Earls or Marquisses; for these Fathers Receive none into their Society, but persons of the Highest Quality. I continued Two whole Years in this Employment, during which time I received a Thousand marks of Kindness and Civility from my young Religious Scholars, besides the continual Experience I had of the Bounty and Generosity of the Noble Prelat.

You cannot doubt, Sir, but that by this means I had the fairest Opportunity I could wish for, to penetrate all the Secrets of *Monkery*, for they kept nothing from me; and tho' I was not one of them, yet I liv'd and continually Convers'd with them, neither was any thing hid from me. Wherefore I may say, without boasting, That I can speak of the Monastick-way of Living upon good grounds, which I intend to do in my next LETTER to you. As for this I have now in hand, as I have already begun it, with giving you some account of the Manner of their *Processions*, so I intend

intend to proſecute the ſame Subject; and the rather, becauſe I find here, in this City, Matter enough to Stuff it out, and ſuch as is very curious too; and therefore hope, that the Recital I ſhall make of it, will not prove unacceptable or tedious to you. I ſhall begin with the *Proceſſions* which are celebrated during the *Octave*, or Week of the Holy Sacrament in the City of *Bononia*: The Feaſt of the *Holy Sacrament* having been inſtituted on purpoſe, *to make the Hoſt to Triumph*, as the *Papiſts* ſay, they omit nothing that may render that Day, and the Week following, the moſt pompous and ſolemn that may be. They make many fine *Proceſſions*, and carry the Conſecrated *Hoſt*, (which they ſay, is the Living Body of our Saviour *Jeſus Chriſt*) through their Streets, with very Magnificent Shows and Ceremonies.

In *France*, it is the Cuſtom on this occaſion, to Adorn the Fronts of Houſes with curious Tapeſtries, and to ſtrew the Streets with Flowers and ſweet ſmelling Herbs. They erect Oratories, or Repoſitories, (as they call them) at certain diſtances, there to repoſe the *Holy Sacrament*, as if it were very weary with the March it had taken. They Dreſs up abundance of Little Children, like Angels, to ſtrew Flowers in the Way before it, and to Incenſe it: And in a word, they make a Thouſand Idolatrous Proſtrations and Adorations to it. In *Germany* they Adorn all their Streets with the Branches of Trees on both ſides of them, by this means turning their Cities into Parks, or Foreſts, or rather into Fine Gardens, whereof every

every Street represents a long walk, as far as one could see, all set with Trees and Verdure. But *Italy* being the most ingenious of them all, as well as the most Superstitious, does by many degrees excel all other Nations that profess the *Roman Catholick Religion*; and the City *Bononia* exceeds the rest of *Italy* in her famous celebration of the *Octave* of the *Holy Sacrament*.

Besides the great *General Procession* which is made throughout that City, the *Thursday* after *Trinity Sunday* (which is the day appointed for that Feast) at which all the Clergy, both Regular and Secular, with all the Magistrates of the City do assist; there are every year three Parishes appointed to furnish and make the preparatives for the *Octave*; and having discharged their turn, they are quit of that Expence for Twelve or fourteen years after, until all the rest have had theirs; this being a very chargeable Office. About a fortnight or three weeks before the Feast, they barricado all the Entries of the Streets of those Parishes, to hinder Horses and Carts from passing that way, that the Workmen may apply themselves to their Work without disturbance. The chief Work, and that which is most painful, and takes up most time, is, to cover all the Streets and Walls with Veils of Silk, which are the Manufactory of that City, and to form them into Figures and Histories. The several Parishes, when their turn comes, strive to outvy one another in some new Invention or other. Some with these little Veils represent all manner of Birds, others

all

all Four-footed Beasts, insomuch that a Man cannot so much as imagine any whole Figure is not to be found there. Others endeavour to represent in the said silken Figures, Huntings, Battels, Triumphs, and in a word, an infinite Variety of things extreamly pleasing to the Eye. Moreover, they expose to publick view in the Streets, all the most curious Pictures which the Inhabitants of those Parishes are Masters of, not excepting the profane ones themselves; amongst which are to be seen many infamous naked Pictures, and *Grotesques*, to cause laughter.

The *Bononians* are extreamly curious in Pictures; all their Closets, Halls, and Chambers are full hung with them; and forasmuch as they expose them to publick view at this time, Travellers meet with the satisfaction of seeing very rare and curious Pieces of Art. Over and above all this, Altars are erected almost in every corner of the Streets, set forth and adorn'd with Statues, Images, and Vessels of Gold and Silver; and upon every Altar there is always a Representation to the Life, of some Mystery of our Religion, or of some Saint. The Houses of the Great Lords of those Parishes that furnish the Ornament of the Feast, are open to all: As long as this Feast lasts, they take care to adorn their Chambers the most sumptuously they can, and to expose all their Riches to view: There be some of them so splendid and liberal, to bestow cooling Liquors, called *Sorbetti*, upon all comers, or at least upon all persons who appear never so little considerable; and in their Courts,

Courts or Gardens, they have Fountains Running with Wine in great abundance for the Common People.

All things being thus prepared, the *Proceſſion* begins: This is a Work on which the *Prieſts* exhauſt their Invention, and rack their Brain, to bring forth ſomething New and Unlook'd for, that may pleaſe the Spectators. They dreſs up a great many Little Children like Angles, with Wings at their Backs, they make very lively Repreſentations of all the Figures and Types mention'd in the Old Teſtament, which they conceive did prefigure their Holy Sacrament; as *Abraham*'s Sacrificing of his Son *Iſaac*, the Offering of *Melchiſedeck*, the *Shew-Bread*, the *Paſchal Lamb*, *&c.* They repreſent all the Prophets and *Sibyls*, that have Prophecied of our Saviour: And laſt of all, they make a Show of the *Bleſſed Virgin*, the *Twelve Apoſtles*, and our *Saviour*, who follows them with a Loaf in his Hand, as if he were about to break it, as he did at the Celebration of his Holy Supper. Beſides theſe, they alſo give us the Repreſentations of many of their He and She Saints, which were the moſt devoted to the Holy Sacrament; as S. *Thomas Aquinas*, S. *Anthony* of *Padua*, S. *Roſe* of *Viterbo*, *&c.* All theſe they repreſent not in Figures to the Life, but Living Figures, that is, young Boys and Girls, chuſing the prettieſt and handſomeſt they can meet with. Above all, I took notice of many Little S. *John Baptiſts* amongſt them. To repreſent theſe S. *John Baptiſts*, they take Little Children of Four or Five years of Age, ſtrip them ſtark Naked, and put nothing upon them beſides

besides a Colour'd Riband, which like a Belt reacheth from their Right Shoulder, to their Left Thigh; so as it doth not hinder their Nakedness from being expos'd to publick View. It is not now only, that the *Italians* are accus'd of equally loving both Sexes; so that no body needs to be surpriz'd at their having so great Devotion to these Little S. *Johns*; of whom I very well remember, I counted no less than Twenty in one *Procession*, following one another. In one Hand they hold a great Cross, made of Reed, and very light; and with the other, they lead a little Lamb in a String. After all this Pageantry, follow the *Priests*, in magnificent Habits, and next to them follows the *Holy Sacrament*, which is carried under a Rich Canopy, surrounded with an infinite number of young Boys and Girls, attir'd like Angels, who all the Way strew Flowers before it. Near to the Canopy there is always an Excellent Company of Musicians, who sing Hymns and Songs of the Holy Sacrament, being those the Church of *Rome* has compos'd since the Council of *Trent*, in honour of it. The Canopy is follow'd by the Principal Men of the Parish; and after them, to shut up all, a vast Crowd of People of all sorts. In this manner they *Walk Our Lord* (to use their own Expression) throughout all the Streets of the Parish; but yet so, as to give him leave to repose himself at the End of every Street, on the Altars erected for that purpose.

When the *Procession* is ended, they do not for all that take away the Adorning of their Streets, but leave them whole and entire for many days; to give the

the Citizens leave to view them at their leiſure, and to walk the ſame Round the Proceſſion took; for in ſo doing they believe they ſhall merit much, and obtain great Indulgences. All the *Sbirris* of the Legat and Archbiſhop, do guard all theſe Pageants all Night, to prevent the ſtealing of them. And it is chiefly at Night, that the Gentlemen and Ladies of the Town walk abroad to take a view of them, becauſe then they make the fineſt Show; all the Streets being illuminated with a vaſt number of white Wax-Tapers, ſet thick in every corner, which very much exalt the ſplendour of thoſe rich and pompous Ornaments. Here it is they court their Miſtreſſes, make Aſſignations, and diſpatch Notes to one another, and in the end, always ſome miſerable Wretch or other is left a cold Victim on the ground to the Revenge of his Enemies, or the Jealouſie of his Rivals. All the Ladies of Pleaſure, in a particular manner, never fail of coming thither towards Evening, where they continue till they have got their prey. In a word, it appears that the moſt innocent are thoſe, who repair thither only to ſatisfie their Eyes, or pleaſe their Curioſity; for as for Devotion, there is not ſo much as the leaſt ſhadow of it to be diſcern'd amongſt them. Thus are theſe fine gawdy Feaſts, inſtituted on purpoſe to confound the Proteſtants, within a ſhort time, by a juſt Judgment of God, become the ſhame and confuſion of Papiſts themſelves; and I have reaſon to fear, that our Lord Jeſus will tell them to their faces, at that Great Day, in which he will come to judge both the Quick and the Dead, that his Soul has abhor'd their Feaſts,

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and that their Income has been an Abomination unto him; because instead of advancing his Glory by them, as they seem to pretend, they have only endeavour'd to satisfie their own Curiosity, Vanity, and infamous Lusts.

I have been a Spectator of many other *Processions*, made in honour of the Holy Sacrament at *Venice*, *Milan*, and other parts of *Italy*; but I will not take up time to give you the Particulars of them, because they generally are the same thing over again, except only, that their Adornings of the Streets are not so Curious, neither continue so long a Time as those at *Bononia*. I cannot find that the *Priests* reap any great Benefit from these *Processions*, but on the contrary are at the Charges of Adorning their Churches and Altars: But however, they hereby gain much Credit and Repute to their *Priesthood* and *Masses*; and they appear at them with so much Majesty, and dress with such pompous Ornaments, and Habiliments, that it makes the People conceive a greater Veneration for their Persons. However, they know very well how to Repay themselves this Charge they are at, upon other Occasions: 'Tis but Unveiling one of their Miraculous Images, when they have a mind to Reimburse themselves, double and treble. And probably 'tis for this very Reason, that at *Bononia*, (a short time after the *Octave* of the Holy Sacrament) they make that great Ceremony and Procession of our Lady of *S. Luke*. To give you some Idea of it, I shall tell you, that about Five Miles from *Bononia*, upon an high Hill called the *Mount de la Guardias*,

Guardias, ſtands a Church, wherein is kept an Image, of the *Virgin*, which the *Papiſts* tell us was painted by S. *Luke* himſelf. The Prieſts have ſo beſtirr'd themſelves, as to perſuade the Magiſtrates to put the City under her protection, giving her the Title of *Their Patroneſs and Conſervatrix*; *Patrona & Conſervatrix Bononiæ.* They have cauſed a Coin to be ſtampt in honour of her, which on the one ſide bears the Repreſentation of the Image pretendedly painted by S. *Luke*; and on the Reverſe, the Arms of the City; which piece of Mony they call a *Madonnine.* The Magiſtrates have made a Vow, to go and fetch this Image every year, and carry it in Proceſſion: They bring it from *Mount de la Guardia* to their Town, to the end ſhe may bleſs its Inhabitants.

Many days before this Solemnity, great Preparations are made to fetch her off in Triumph. Having got her into the City, they make her ſtay there 8 Days, during which time they remove her to two or three Churches, where the people flock in throngs to viſit her, and offer great Preſents, all which accrue to the profit of the *Prieſts* of thoſe Churches. After that they have ſufficiently idoliz'd this Image, or Picture, they oblige her to give her Bleſſing to all the People. To this purpoſe they faſten the Picture to great Staves or Poles, ſupported by Men; and lifting it up on high, they make it bow and incline towards the People, as if ſhe ſaluted them. This done, they lift her up a little higher, and incline her downwards again; and then ſtoop her down towards the Right and Left, that ſo ſhe may make

the

the Sign of the Croſs over all the People that are preſent; and this, forſooth, is her Bleſſing of the People. To receive this *Benediction* with the greater Reverence, all the People are down upon their Knees, with their Faces bow'd down to the Ground. All this while the Trumpets and Drums do Wonders. And after this Ceremony is over, ſhe is conducted back again, in the ſame Proceſſional way, to the place of her abode, where ſhe continues all the year after, except ſome publick Calamity oblige the Magiſtrates to permit the bringing of her extraordinarily to the City in Proceſſion; for in that caſe, they believe ſhe will not fail of redreſſing all the Evils they can lye under. Every *Saturday* there is a vaſt concourſe of people comes to this Image from the City of *Bononia*, and adjoyning places.

To make the way more commodious for thoſe devout Pilgrims, the *Bononians* have undertaken to make a covered way, which begins at the Gate of the City, and is intended to be carried on to that of the Church, where the Image reſides. Above half of this way was already finiſhed, when I was there. The whole is compos'd of great Portico's of Brick, very large and high roof'd, the Roofs being all curiouſly painted; and the bottom is paved very neatly with great ſquare Bricks. When this Portal is once finiſhed, it will be one of the moſt curious pieces of Workmanſhip that is in all *Italy*. Many particular Noblemen, have ſignaliz'd their Zeal for carrying on of this Work, having each of them made ſeveral Arches of it at their

own Charges, on which they have caused their Arms to be painted. But in the mean time, tho' this Work be already so far advanced, yet some are afraid they shall never see it brought to perfection; because the remaining part is the most difficult to compass, and will cost much more than what is already done; for this *Portal* is now to be carried on, up the Mountain, till it reach the Church of our Lady on the Top of it; and to this end they must be obliged to Dig very deep, to find firm Ground whereon to lay a solid Foundation. A good Curate perceiving, that the Devotion of Contributing to this vast Expence began to grow cold, found out a very ingenious way to excite the Drowzy and Lethargic Charities of the People, making use of the following Device:

He acquainted his Parishioners, *That he felt himself inspir'd by the* Virgin, *to make a Procession to the* Miraculous Image *with Twelve Wagons loaden with Materials, for carrying on this Structure; he desired them to shew their Zeal in contributing to so good a Work; and that for his part, he would take care to range the Procession in Order, according to the Model the* Virgin *had been pleased to give him of it in a Dream.* His Parishioners very punctually executed the Orders he had given them, lading four Wagons with Bricks, four with Lime, and four with Sand. The Curate seeing their forwardness, sent every where for Flowers and sweet Herbs to cover the Wagons, and to make Garlands for the Oxen that drew them; he got their Horns and Hoofs to be gilt, and set himself at the Head of

this

this Convoy, with the Croſs and Banner, having procur'd ſeveral young Girls with Timbrels in their Hands to play upon them, and Dance about the Wagons, as *David* did before the Ark. In this Equipage he paſs'd through all the Streets of the City. He had the Approbation of the *Italians*, who are much delighted with new and well contriv'd Inventions, and eſpecially wherein Women or Girls come to play their parts. The good Succeſs this Curate met with, beſides the general Approbation, put all his Brethren upon doing ſomething in Imitation of him, and, if poſſible, to go beyond him. So that about a Fortnight after there was to be ſeen a general Proceſſion of all the Pariſhes with above 200 Wagons loaden with Bricks, Lime, and Sand, drawn by Oxen with gilded Horns. I never ſaw a more Extravagant Proceſſion than this was, nor a more pleaſant one. The March advanced in very good order, with Croſſes, Banners, Prieſts, and the Girls that Danced, towards our Lady of *S. Luke*, and helpt to build a great part of that *Portal*. As ſoon as it is finiſhed, they will be able to go (at all Seaſons, and in all Weathers) from *Bononia* to the place of Devotion, without wetting or dirting themſelves, any more than if they were in their own Houſes.

But that I may not wander too far from my Subject of Proceſſions, I ſhall further acquaint you, that the *Monks* do far excel the *Prieſts* in their Invention on theſe Occaſions. There is ſcarcely an Holiday or Sunday paſſeth over their heads, with out ſome Proceſſion or other made in their Mona-

ſteries. The *Dominicans* make a Proceſſion of the *Roſary* every firſt Sunday of the Month, and the ſecond Sundays the *Carmelites* make one in honour of the *Scapulary*; the third Sundays, the *Soccolanti* celebrate a Proceſſion in honour of S. *Anthony* of *Padua*. 'Tis in theſe Monkiſh Proceſſions that all is put in practice, wherewith Lewdneſs and Vanity are capable of inſpiring the moſt looſe and effeminate Souls; ſo far are they from being Religious Employments, and fitted for Devotion, as they pretend them to be. By the ſmall taſte I ſhall here give you of them, you may be able to judge of all the reſt. I ſhall begin with a Proceſſion of the *Roſary*, which I ſaw at *Venice*, made by the *Dominicans* of *Caſtello*, which was order'd in this manner:

Next after the Croſs and Banner, went about Two or Three hundred little Children, dreſt like Angels, and others like little He and She Saints, amongſt which they did not forget to place a good number of little S. *John Baptiſts*: Theſe were followed by Thirty or Forty young Women, repreſenting ſo many Saints of their Sex. One of them repreſented S. *Apollina*; and to diſtinguiſh her from the reſt, ſhe carried in her hand a Baſon gilt and enamell'd, in which there were Teeth; another repreſented S. *Lucia*, and carried in a Baſon two Eyes; a third, S. *Agnes*, who carried in her Arms a living Lamb; and ſo of the reſt, every one of them being Characterized by their Marks of diſtinction. There were ſome of them that were prepar'd on purpoſe to make people laugh, and

above

above all the reſt, a Saint *Genevieve*, who had a lighted Wax-Taper in one hand, and in the other a Book wherein ſhe read, or at leaſt made ſhew of doing ſo; and round about her there were Seven or Eight young Boys dreſt like Devils, all over black as a Coal, with great long Tails, and very extravagant and ridiculous Countenances, and great Horns on their Heads; theſe skipped about the Saint, and made a Thouſand ridiculous poſtures, Apiſh tricks, and faces, to endeavour to diſtract and divert her from reading of her *Breviary*, by making of her laugh. The Maiden who acted the perſonage of this Saint, had been choſen by them on purpoſe of a Melancholy Temperament, who accordingly acted her part very well; ſhe always kept her Eyes fix'd on her *Hours*, without giving the leaſt ſhew of a Smile; tho' all the Spectators that were preſent could not contain themſelves from burſting out into loud Laughter, to ſee the ridiculous Poſtures thoſe little Devils put themſelves into, and who were certainly moſt impudent and pickel'd Youths; foraſmuch as many times they made a ſhew of taking up her Coats. This Saint was followed by another, as fit to make the people laugh as the former; this was a S. *Catherine* of *Sienna*, who had by her ſide a pretty little Boy, with a Broom in one Hand, and a pair of Bellows in the other; for they hold, that this Saint (who was a Religious of the *Dominican* Order) had ſo great a Familiarity with the Child *Jeſus*, that that Divine Infant, to eaſe her when ſhe was weary, frequently came and ſwept her Cham-

ber, and kindled her Fire. After theſe good She-Saints came all thoſe whom they call *Figures*, comprehending all thoſe Holy Women, who according to them did repreſent the *Bleſſed Virgin* in the Old Teſtament; they were carried upon Frames on Mens Shoulders. Amongſt the reſt there was *Jael* to be ſeen in her Tent, with *Siſera* lying at her Feet, who was a Beautiful young Youth, dreſt in the Garb of a Warriour, and ſhe with a Great Nail and Hammer, making ſhew as if ſhe had been ready to pierce his Temples: After this Figure came a *Dalila*, ſitting in an Elbow-Chair with a comly young Youth between her knees; ſhe had a pair of Sciſſors in her Hand, as if ſhe had been about to cut off his Locks. After theſe appeareth *Judith*: This was a fine Figure indeed; for on the Frame where ſhe was, there were above Twenty perſons, it being the Repreſentation of *Judiths* Return to *Bethuliah* in Triumph with *Holofernes* his Head, when the Prieſts and People came out to meet, and ſung a Song in praiſe of her. This *Judith* was one of the moſt Beautiful young Women of *Italy*, and very Laſciviouſly dreſt; round about her (upon the ſame Frame or Pageant) they had placed ſeveral excellent Muſicians, who ſung moſt Raviſhing *Stanza's* in honour of her. The following Pageant, as if they had a mind to oppoſe *Deformity* to *Beauty*, ſupported a good Old Woman, without any Teeth in her Head, and very deformed; who mutter'd ſomething within her Gums, and repreſented *Hannah* the Mother of *Samuel*. I was aſtoniſh'd to ſee a Woman

Woman of her Age would truſt her ſelf on a Pageant. She was followed by many more Pageants; which were in all Eighteen in number, with their different Figures; but I ſhall not inſiſt upon a particular deſcription of any more of them, that I may not tire you out; and ſhall only tell you, that the laſt of them all was the Truth of all theſe Figures, and the Perſon typified, *viz.* the *Bleſſed Virgin*, who was repreſented by a very comly and Beautiful Maid, very Richly dreſt, with a great Royal Robe; ſhe held a great *Roſary* or *Beadrow* in her left Hand, and in her right Hand a Scepter. She had a rich *Crown* upon her Head, ſet thick with *Pearls* and *Diamonds*.

People of Quality in *Italy* take it to be a Meritorious piece of Service to accommodate the Saints of both Sexes, with their richeſt Jewels, at theſe Proceſſions; which is the Reaſon, that very frequently on theſe Occaſions great Riches are expos'd to view.

I obſerved, that when this young Woman, who repreſented the *Bleſſed Virgin* paſt by, carried on a Pageant, no Body ſtirr'd their Hats, no Body bow'd themſelves, or fell down to Worſhip her, or call upon her; but a little while after, when the Wooden Image of the *Virgin* came to paſs by them, (which is the ſame that ſtands on the Altar of the Chappel of the *Roſary* of the *Dominicans* of *Caſtello*) all the People fell down on their Knees, and beating their Breaſts, called her the *Mother of God*, and prayed to her. They made her, at certain diſtances, to beſtow her Salutations

and

and Benedictions upon the people, in the ſame manner I related to you, ſpeaking of our Lady of S. *Luke* of *Bononia*, and which were received by them with a great deal of Acknowledgment, as a very great Favour. Having apply'd my Mind to find out the reaſon, why the Papiſts do not pay their Adorations to living Figures, tho' they indeed repreſent the Virgin more naturally, than a piece of Stone or Wood can do; and yet are ſo exact in beſtowing them on their Inanimate Statues: After having ſpent ſome Thoughts upon it, I could not light upon any other Reaſon but this; That Human Nature having a kind of Horrour impreſt upon it, of rendring to the *Creature* a Worſhip that is due to *GOD* only, all Living Figures (and eſpecially thoſe of *Men* and *Women*) do more fully diſcover to the Senſe their weak dependent Creatural Being, than Inanimate things do, in which they ſuppoſe there is ſome ſecret adherent Divine Virtue. Tho', to ſpeak the truth, this is no other than the higheſt pitch of Folly, and the root and riſe of all Idolatry. But I return to our Proceſſion.

This Image of Wood was carried in the midſt of the Father *Dominicans*, who were to the number of about an Hundred; for they having many Convents in *Venice*, they are ready to aſſiſt one another upon the like Occaſions. Nothing can be imagin'd more looſe and laſcivious than they appear'd in all their Deportment; they had great *Roſaries* on their Arms, but there was none of them that troubled himſelf to ſay them, except it

it were ſome old Father amongſt them, that was going out of the World, and was no more fit to make any Figure in it; but all the reſt of them, ſtrutted and march'd in a moſt wanton manner in their fine white Habits. All the way they went they talk'd and laugh'd together, caſting their Eyes this way and that way on the Ladies that look'd out of the Windows, or ſtood in the Streets, to ſee the Proceſſion march along.

I do not think, Sir, it will be neceſſary for me to deſire you to make ſome Reflection on theſe kind of proceedings; becauſe you cannot but take notice from the Recital I give you, what all theſe Proceſſions aim at. Certainly, they are at the beſt no better than Entertainments for Children, or rather ridiculous Farces to pleaſe Fools; but which at the ſame time expoſe the Chriſtian Religion to the reproach and deriſion of Atheiſts and Infidels. Some perſons reported to me of a truth, that they had overheard ſome Turkiſh Merchants, who were Spectators at this Proceſſion, ſaying to one another, *Have you ever ſeen the like Extravagant Fooleries? And, muſt not a Man be bereft of his Senſes, before he can ever be perſuaded to embrace ſuch a Religion?* The Papiſts boaſt themſelves in this, as an infallible Mark of the Truth of their Religion, That there is no one Chriſtian Society in the World, that take more pains for the Converſion of Infidels, and who are bleſt with greater Succeſs in that Undertaking, than themſelves. But ſuppoſing all they ſay to be true, yet I am ſure it may be ſaid (with much more

more Truth,) That there is no Christian Church in the World, is a greater Obstacle to the Conversion of Infidels than theirs is, and that for One whom they Convert, they hinder a Million from being Converted, who probably might come to the Light of the Gospel, had they not been Eye-witnesses of the gross Folly and Idolatry of their pretended Religious Practices: Yea, they are even found in the use of those things which make their own *Roman Catholicks* of Forein Countries to Blush for them, when they are told of it. The *English Papists* look upon such Relations barely as Exaggerations and Calumnies devised by their Enemies, to blacken them. All that I can say to this sort of People is, That if they please to go to *Italy*, their own Eyes will be able to convince them of more and greater Extravagancies, than those I have related to you in any of my LETTERS. The very same Follies were formerly in Vogue and Practise in *France*; but the sight only of the *Protestants* that were mingled amongst them, have made them drop a good number of them. Thus by a special effect of the Goodness of God, the Presence only of *Protestants* carries a kind of Blessing with it, which secretly reproves and corrects Vice, confounds Error, and inspires Truth.

I will add to this *Procession*, I saw at *Venice*, another I have seen at *Milan*: This was celebrated by the *Carmelites* in Honour of the *Little Scapulary*, wherewith I have entertain'd you in a former LETTER; and that I may not trouble you with Repetitions of the *Angels* and *Figures*, which

which were of the ſame kind, as thoſe I have already given you a deſcription of; I ſhall only take notice to you of ſuch Particulars as were ſingular, and different in this *Proceſſion* from thoſe before related. One thing very remarkable in this *Proceſſion* was, That moſt of the young Gentlewomen of the Town aſſiſted at it in their Richeſt Cloaths, and adorn'd with all their Jewels. They marched Four in a Rank, with great white Wax Tapers in their Hands, and all the way they went, ſung the Pſalms and Hymns to the *Bleſſed Virgin*, that are uſed in the *Roman Church*. The Women in *Italy* are not wont to Sing in their Churches, it being forbidden them, except thoſe only who are of ſome Religious Order. However the *Carmelites* made bold to introduce this piece of Novelty, either to give themſelves the ſatisfaction of being Charm'd with ſo many ſweet Voices, or at leaſt to flatter and pleaſe the Humor of the *Milan* Gentlemen, who were extreamly pleas'd with the Device. They were rang'd on both Sides of the Street, to ſee the young Ladies paſs by, who went with Naked Breaſts, and with an Air of Wantonneſs, proper to inſpire their Lovers with a Devotion indeed, but very different from what was pretended.

It was about an hour and half in the Night when the *Proceſſion* began to ſet forth, and the Light of the Wax-Candles and Torches, much advanced the luſtre of the Beauty and Ornaments of this Choice Band. All the Way they paſt, the Streets rung with nothing but, *Ay, this is a fine*

Show

Show indeed! O, *the lovely Proceſſion*! *See, how gracefully the Lady of* N. *carries her Taper*! *What a majeſtick and becoming Gate that Lady has*? O, *the charming Voice of this ſweet One here*! Others again more impertinent than the former, caſt out words to them (as they paſs'd by) of a double meaning, which in the midſt of ſo holy an Exerciſe, as (forſooth) they will needs have it to be, were pregnant Inſtances of the profaneſs and filth of their Hearts. After the Ladies, came the Fathers *Carmelites*, Two and Two together; ſo that this whole Proceſſion was only compos'd of Women and Monks, with a wooden Image repreſenting the *Virgin*, which brought up the Rear, and to which all the Spectators paid their Adorations, Kneeling down in the Streets when it paſſed by, to receive its Salutations and Benedictions, which the good Fathers *Carmelites*, that bore the Statue, made her beſtow upon the people.

The Monks and Prieſts pleaſe themſelves extreamly in making ſuch like Proceſſions in their ſeveral Churches; becauſe it is upon theſe Occaſions, that they appear with a pomp and luſtre, that dazles the eyes of the people, and makes the ſimple imagin they diſcern ſomething in their perſons that is more than Human; tho' indeed all this be at the bottom no more than a fooliſh Vanity, and a pure Illuſion of the Spirit of this World. We don't find them ſo zealous for, and ready to aſſiſt at thoſe Proceſſions, that have any thing that is painful annex'd to them; and at which the Ladies cannot conveniently aſſiſt. This is what I obſerv'd at *Milan*, at

at the time of the *Rogations* that are kept in *Aſcenſion Week*. 'Tis a Cuſtom obſerv'd in all Countries that are of the *Romiſh* Communion, to make Proceſſions the Three days before *Holy Thurſday*; that is to ſay, to go with Croſs and Banner from one Church to another, to ſay their prayers.

Now at *Milan* this Proceſſion begins not till an Hour after Midnight, and doth not end till the next Day at Two of the Clock in the Afternoon. All the Prieſts of the City, and adjoyning places, are bound to aſſiſt at them, not excepting the ſtranger Prieſts that are in the City. They muſt preciſely meet at the Hour appointed, at the Sound of the great Bell of the Cathedral, in order to range themſelves under the Croſs and Banner. But becauſe the great Allurement is wanting in theſe kind of Proceſſions, the Prieſts had rather ſleep far in the Day, than to take the pains to aſſiſt at them: But the Cardinal-Archbiſhop, tho' he does not care for going himſelf, has at laſt found out a way to make them go, tho' ſore againſt their wills; for by his Order all the *Sbirris* of the Archbiſhoprick being joyn'd with thoſe of the Town, to the number of an Hundred and fifty, armed with Blunderbuſſes, Piſtols, and Bayonets, divide themſelves into ſeveral ſmall parties of five or ſix together, and go the Round through all the Streets of the City, to look for the Prieſts that are abſent from the Proceſſion; they go and ſearch for them in their very Houſes, and in caſe they find any, they tye their Hands together on their Backs,

and

and in this Infamous manner, drag them to the Archbiſhops Priſons. When they are come to the Priſon Gates, then *Sbirri* ſearch their Cloaths and Pockets, and after having very Abuſively treated them, they take from them all they find about them, and thruſt them down into a Dungeon; where they remain, till they be Summoned to Appear in the Archbiſhops Court; where at laſt they are acquitted, after a ſmall Reproof, and a Mulct of Twenty Crowns to the Archbiſhop. The *Prieſts* ſeeing that there was no way of exempting themſelves from aſſiſting at the Proceſſion, found out the Secret however, of making it ſomewhat more ſweet and eaſie to them.

The *Proceſſion* goes in One Morning only to Ten or Twelve Churches, where they enter, and ſtay for ſome conſiderable Time, to Sing their *Litanies*; but foraſmuch as the *Prieſts*, by reaſon of their great Numbers, cannot all enter into the ſame Church, the far greater part of them being oblig'd to ſtand abroad in the Streets, about the Church; but they not liking this Waiting abroad, found a means to take up all the adjoyning Taverns and Victualling-Houſes, and there made much of themſelves, whilſt their Brethren were Singing in the Church; and after they had well ſolac'd themſelves, went and reliev'd their Brethren, giving them an occaſion to do as they had done, and by this means the Office was diſpatch'd with much more Courage and Vigour. But the thing in it ſelf being ſo baſe and ſcandalous in the Eyes of the Seculars, and ſome Complaints having been made

made of their diſorderly Carriage to the Archbiſhop, he order'd ſome Thirty of his *Sbirris* ſhould always Coaſt about the Proceſſion, and ſearch all the Taverns for *Prieſts*, and if they find any, to drive them thence; ſo that the poor *Prieſts* being ſo nearly watch'd, are debarr'd of the Opportunity of Refreſhing themſelves with a Glaſs of good Wine. However this doth not hinder, but that ſome of them take care to have a Bottle of Wine in their Pockets, or ſome other Convenience, under their Surplices; and when they have a mind to take a Sup, they pray ſome of their Brethren to ſtand round them, and ſtooping a little, that they may not be perceived by the *Sbirris*, they very dexterouſly Refreſh themſelves, in ſpite of the Machinations of their Enemies.

When the *Proceſſion* enters into any Churches belonging to *Monks*, the *Prieſts* get themſelves into the Convent which joyns to it, where the *Monks* (that any of them are acquainted with) treat them with Meat and Drink, as much as they deſire; and here they are ſecured from the Search of the *Sbirris*, who have no power to look for them there; and ſhould they attempt ſuch a thing, would find but a very bad Welcom. As ſoon as the *Proceſſion* is arriv'd to a certain Church, ſpecified by the Archbiſhop, the Twelve Eccleſiaſtical *Præfects* of the Twelve Gates of *Milan*, which are all *Arch-Prieſts*, and who have the inſpection of all the Clergy divided amongſt them, aſſemble themſelves in ſome great Place, and every one of them having a Liſt of all the *Prieſts* that are

under his Juriſdiction, they Read their Names aloud one after another, being all of them obliged to Anſwer to their Names, and preſent themſelves. If any one be found wanting, the ſame day a Note is ſent to his Houſe, to pay the Twenty Crowns mulct for his Abſence. The whole Ceremony being finiſh'd, the *Proceſſion* returns to the Cathedral. It is commonly Three of the Clock in the Afternoon before the *Proceſſion* enters the Cathedral; and then upon the Ringing of the Great Bell, every one of them has leave to return home, the *Sbirri* having no further power to meddle with them; but they Scuffle home with that precipitation, as makes the Spectators Laugh heartily, to ſee Hungry Prieſts poſt away to their long-look'd-for Dinners.

Now it is apparent, that theſe *Rogation Proceſſions* are ſo very diſpleaſing to them; becauſe, firſt of all, there is nothing to be Gain'd by them. In the ſecond place, there are no Ladies to aſſiſt at them. And thirdly, there are neither Angels nor Figures, to give them the leaſt Sport or Diverſion. In the fourth place, they are not permitted to Solemnize theſe Proceſſions in their pompous Habits, but ſimply with their Surplices and ſquare Bonnets, which is the cauſe why the Seculars will not ſo much as ſtep out of their way to ſee them paſs. Fifthly, the Proceſſion being enjoyn'd them, under rigorous Mulcts and Puniſhments, this is that which makes it go moſt of all againſt their Stomach to aſſiſt at it; for as much pleaſure as they take in imperiouſly Commanding others; ſo much regret they

they have to obey and be ſubject to the Command of their Superiours. And laſt of all, in thoſe kind of Proceſſions, there are ſome Inconveniences to be endur'd; they muſt leave their Beds long before Day; they muſt take many large Turns and wearifom Steps, and Sing long without either Eating or Drinking; which does not very well ſort with their Humor.

The Jolly Proceſſions of the *Holy Sacrament* have much more Charms for them; or the Unveiling of ſome *Miraculous Image*; or the pompous Proceſſion of the *Holy Nail*, which is Celebrated every Summer in *Milan*, and to which not only the Inhabitants of that City, but all the Nobility and Gentry of the Neighbouring Towns and Provinces do flock in Crowds, to be the Spectators of that Ambulatory Pomp and Magnificence. In this caſe there is no need of the *Sbirris*, to oblige the Eccleſiaſticks to aſſiſt at it: The Cardinal Archbiſhop himſelf aſſiſts in perſon at it, and carries the Relick of the *Holy Nail*. According to their Tradition, this is one of thoſe Nails that pierced the Adorable Body of our Lord and Saviour *Jeſus Chriſt*, when he was Nailed to the Croſs; which *Conſtantine* the Great having met with, in Honour to it, made it part of his Horſes Bridle. It is now expos'd to View, enclos'd in a very fair Chryſtal, fix'd upon a large Pedeſtal of pure Gold, of incomparable Workmanſhip, and embeliſh'd with Precious Stones; and is certainly one of the richeſt and fineſt Pieces that can be ſeen, and ſo heavy, that the Cardinal had much ado to carry it.

The Nail is crooked, as having been made a part of a Bridle.

The Reflection I have made upon this Nail is, that according to the Hiſtory it ſelf, which the *Papiſts* give us of it, it appears, That the Relicks, and ſpecially the Inſtruments of the Paſſion of our Saviour, to which they at preſent pretend we are oblig'd to render *Latria*, that is, *Divine Worſhip*, did not in Ancient Times receive any ſuch Honour, ſince *Conſtantine* (as they own themſelves) made that Nail a part of his Horſes Bridle; which no Body will be ſo impertinent as to own for a piece of Divine Honour. He did not cauſe it to be ſet upon the Altar, as it is at preſent; neither did Men Kneel before it, as the practice of the *Papiſts* is at this Day; for otherwiſe it would have follow'd, That wherever *Conſtantine*'s Horſe paſs'd, all Perſons muſt have proſtrated themſelves before it; which is very abſurd, and beſides is not hinted to us in any part of the Hiſtory of that Great Emperour.

And ſince I am inſenſibly fallen upon the Proceſſions that are in Vogue at *Milan*, I think my ſelf bound to give you the deſcription of one of the moſt Famous that City can boaſt of, being the ſame which is put in practice the Eve of *Holy Friday*. This Proceſſion is celebrated by Torch-Light, and proceeds in the Order as follows:

Immediately after the Croſs and Banner, follow the Croſs-Bearers; theſe are Men that carry great *Croſſes* on their Shoulders, fifteen or twenty Foot long; they are very great and heavy in appearance, but

but hollow within, and indeed are nothing but Four thin Boards glu'd together: Yet I am apt to believe, That by reaſon of their great Bulk, they are a reaſonable good Burthen for a ſingle Man, and troubleſom enough to thoſe that bear them; and accordingly they tell us, That theſe Croſs-Bearers perform this piece of Devotion from a Spirit of Repentance and Penance, and to imitate our Saviour *Jeſus Chriſt*, when he carried his *Croſs* up to Mount *Calvary*. There are no leſs commonly than two or three Hundred of them, and the moſt of them have Ropes about their Necks, and great Chains on their Legs, which Trail on the Ground after them, and make a hideous Noiſe. Their Faces are cover'd with great Cowls.

Theſe *Croſs-Bearers* put me in mind of certain Hereticks, mention'd by *Baronius* in his Eccleſiaſtical Annals, who were call'd *Cruciferi*. It ſeems they took that place of the Goſpel according to the Letter, *He that doth not take up his Croſs and follow me, cannot be my Diſciple*: And accordingly they had got great *Croſſes*, which they bore on their Shoulders, and running like Mad-Men over Mountains and through Deſerts, they never quitted them, till Hunger, Thirſt, and Wearineſs, thruſt their Souls out of their Bodies. I muſt confeſs, That thoſe who aſſiſt at theſe Proceſſions, do not ſtrain their Devotion to this pitch; bnt ſtill there is ſomewhat of reſemblance in their Actions.

In the midſt of theſe *Croſs-Bearers* was carried on a Pageant, a Figure of our Saviour going up

to Mount *Calvary*. After these *Croß-Bearers* followed the *Disciplíners*, as they call them; these also had their Faces cover'd with great Cowls, and having their Backs stark Naked, with great *Disciplines* they had in their Hands they cruelly beat themselves, making the Blood to run down their Shoulders in a manner, that caus'd Horrour to Nature. In the midst of these Flagellators, was carried a Representation of the Scourging of our Saviour, ty'd to a Pillar. After these followed several Companies of Souldiers, with their Muskets and Pikes, the Points downwards, and their Colours in like manner. All the Drums were cover'd with Black Cloth, and beating upon it made the Sound very doleful. After the Souldiers, followed a Living Figure of our Saviour, which was a young Man dreſt in a large Purple Robe, with a Crown of Thorns on his Head, and bearing a great Croſs on his Shoulders: He had round about him near a Score of Youths habited like *Jews*, who put themselves into an hundred ridiculous Postures, and made Faces at him after such a manner, as forc'd the Spectators to Laugh, at a Sight, which ought to have melted their Hearts into sorrow and compunction; neither was this a strange thing amongst them, their holy Representations being very surely exempt from some Notorious Profanation: There was no Kneeling to this Figure, because it was a Live one. This Figure was follow'd by all the Confraternities of the City or *Scuole*, which are very numerous. They marched Two and Two with Wax-Tapers lighted in their Hands; and after

after them follow'd another Figure of our Saviour laid in his Sepulchre. As soon as this came by, tho' it were only made of Wood, all that stood in the Streets, fell down on their Knees and worship'd it. About this Figure, there marched a Company of Women all in Mourning, who held their Handkerchiefs before their Eyes, as if they had wept. Next to these Women follow'd the Priests, and after them a Statue of the *Blessed Virgin*, having her Heart pierc'd with Seven great Swords, that stuck fast in it; They commonly call this, *Our Lady of Pity*; and wherever it passed, they paid to it the same Prostrations and Adorations, as to the Statue of our Saviour. A great Throng of People, last of all, concluded the Procession.

I know well enough, that the *Papists* will not only excuse these kinds of Processions, but will also exalt them far above their plain Ones; alledging, That these are all of them Holy Representations which renew in our Minds, the Idea of what pass'd long ago on Mount *Calvary*; But for my part I believe, that the Time they take to dispose and regulate these kind of Processions, and which the Spectators spend in seeing them pass by, would be much better employ'd in Reading and Meditating of the History of our Saviour's Passion in private, in order to the enkindling of holy Affections, suitable to that great Occasion. This, I say, would in all probability be a far more efficacious Means to obtain this Holy End, than to dress up a Man like our Saviour, and turn all to a Farce, to make the people Laugh at so tremendous a Mystery; for this

indeed, however they may otherwiſe diſguiſe it, is the End of all.

Thus likewiſe it is, when five Weeks after *Eaſter* they repreſent the Aſcenſion of our Saviour *Jeſus Chriſt* into Heaven; they have a great Statue of Wood to repreſent him, which they tye with great Cords about the Head, and juſt at Noon-tide of *Aſcenſion-day*, at the Ringing of all the Bells in Town, and in the preſence of all the People, certain Perſons placed on the Roof of the Church, draw it up by Cords into the Air; the Prieſts in the mean time Singing the Anthem, *Viri Galilæi quid admiramini aſpicientes in Cœlum? &c.* When the Statue is ready to enter into the Hole, which they have made on purpoſe in the Roof for it, there are Men poſted, who from the high Galleries of the Church caſt ſome twenty or thirty Pails of Water on the Spectators; ſo that many of them are made wet to the Skins, which makes the reſt break out into loud Laughter. This is the devout End of this fine Ceremony, or holy Repreſentation, as they are pleas'd to term it. I have ſeen this particularly practis'd in *Germany*; where I have alſo ſeen a great number of *Croſs-Bearers* and *Diſcipliners*, as in *Italy*. And indeed, to judge by outward appearance, one would believe theſe Perſons to be animated by a great Spirit of Devotion and Mortification; but having made it my buſineſs to ſearch into the Matter, I found that the moſt of them are engag'd to do it for Intereſt ſake, being paid for Laſhing of themſelves, becauſe the Eccleſiaſticks think it a ſhame, if in a *Lent Proceſſion*

ceſſion they ſhould not have a good Number of theſe Men of Diſcipline, and Croſs-Bearers. Others again do it, becauſe their Confeſſors have enjoyn'd it them, as a piece of Penance.

I know indeed no Reaſon, why the Prieſts ſhould pride themſelves with this; but ſure I am, I have often heard them Reproach one another, that they had none, or very few Scourgers in their Proceſſions. 'Tis poſſible, that by a ſottiſh kind of Vanity they may ſuppoſe that the Glory of theſe kind of publick Penances reflects upon themſelves, as being the Impoſers of them, in which caſe their Vain-glory is no better founded, than the *Crow's* in the Fable, who prided himſelf with that was none of his. They are very well pleaſed, to ſee others Laſh themſelves; but not ſo much as one of them will be an Example of it to others; for never in my Life did I ſee either *Prieſts* or *Monks* whip themſelves in publick. Theſe *Whippers* and *Croſs-Bearers*, for the moſt part, to make this piece of Penance more tolerable to them, drink themſelves to a good pitch before they ſet out a Proceſſioning.

Whilſt I was at *Mentz* in *Germany*, I ſaw a great Inconvenience and Diſappointment happen upon this Occaſion; where many of theſe *Croſs Bearers*, in the midſt of the Proceſſion, threw down their *Croſſes* in the Streets, and very fairly ſet themſelves down upon them, ſaying, *That they had born them long enough*, and *that it was but fitting the* Croſſes *ſhould now bear them.* Beſides, many of the *Diſcipliners* fell a Singing and Dancing, and Vomiting the ſurplus of the Wine they had

had taken. Moſt of them were *Jeſuit* Scholars, whom their Regents had forc'd to this involuntary Mortification.

By this, Sir, you may eaſily diſcern, that the *Papiſts* will make all things bend and ſtoop to their Fancy and Humor. They have almoſt fram'd to themſelves a New Goſpel; and they interpret the Myſteries of it ſo materially and groſly, that in the end they will probably perſuade People, That to bear their Croſs in this World, is nothing elſe, but to go a Proceſſioning with great Croſſes of Wood upon their Shoulders; and conſequently maintain, That it is a meer Hereſie to believe with the Proteſtants, *That true Mortification is that of an humble and contrite Heart, and of a Soul pierced with an holy Sorrow and Repentance for Sin.* 'Tis ſcarce poſſible to make the Popiſh *Jeſuits* and *Prieſts*, that come into *England*, acknowledge, That theſe ſort of fooliſh Exerciſes of Devotion, are at this Day the moſt frequent Employments of their *Roman Catholicks*, in thoſe Places where that Religion takes place. They are ſo aſham'd to own theſe their Follies, that at preſent none but Travellers are able to convince them thereof, who can tell them, that they have ſeen with their own Eyes, what they ſo impudently deny with their Mouths. It was from an effect of this Shame, that made ſome *Italian* and *German Jeſuits* (in my preſence) Treat a Chapter of a certain Book, as containing nothing but meer Calumnies, becauſe it mention'd a Devotion which is ſtill every Year practis'd in *Italy* and *Germany* at *Chriſtmaſs*, which

which is the Ceremony of Rocking the Cradle of the Child JESUS. And yet there is nothing more true, than that this Custom is much in Vogue amongst them, my self having seen it done several times. Their way is this: They make on an Altar, or in some Chappel of their Churches, a Representation of the Stable at *Bethlehem*, with great Figures representing the *Blessed Virgin*, S. *Joseph*, and the *Child JESUS* lying in his Manger. The *Italians* do excel all others in making those kind of Representations, and make them their Pastime and Diversion all the *Christmass* Holydays; and the Women have leave at that time to go from Church to Church, to see these Pageants, and under pretext of frequenting these Devotions, many Bargains are struck, little suiting with the pretended Holiness of the places where they are made.

It cannot be deny'd, but that there is something in these Representations, that does extreamly take the Eye: You have a pleasant prospect here of Rocks, Fountains, Forests, and delightful Green Plains express'd to the Life, and Shepherds feeding their Flocks upon them: You see People from all parts coming through Lanes and Paths, to offer their Presents to the Child *JESUS*. All this is very naturally represented, and there is always some Merry Conceit or other joyn'd with them, to make People Laugh. But the principal Point I aim at in this Description is, That there are many great Ribbands, or Cords, ty'd to the Cradle of the Child *Jesus*, which the Spectators that are there present, (and upon their Knees) do pull towards them very devoutly,

devoutly, to Rock the Cradle, in like manner as we ſee Nurſes do their Children; and then ſing what in *Italian* they call their *Nà, Nà*, which are Songs commonly ſung, to Rock Children aſleep; *Sleep my Little* Jeſus, *Sleep my Dear Love, Sleep*; *Nà, Nà, Nà, Nà*. But that which ſurpriz'd me beyond meaſure was, to ſee ſometime Old Men and Women riſe up from their Knees in a great Anger, when they heard too much Noiſe made in the Church, and bidding them be Huſht, for that elſe they would awake the Child *Jeſus*; which notwithſtanding is no more than a piece of *Wood*, or *Paſt-Board* painted over: Yea, there be ſome ſo fearful of offending this way, that they pull off their Shoes, aſſoon as they enter the Church, for fear of Troubling the Childs Reſt; whilſt (in the mean time) their *Monks* and *Prieſts*, ſtanding behind in their *Sextries*, Laugh at all theſe their Follies.

I can ſay, that I never ſaw any of them lay hold of the Cords to Rock the Cradle, and would be ſore aſham'd to be found ſo ſottiſhly employ'd. And probably, they would be underſtood in this ſenſe, when they ſay, that this is never practis'd amongſt them, becauſe they do not do it themſelves; but they are very glad to ſee the Seculars ſo well employ'd for their Diverſion. Neither is this Childs Play altogether without Profit to them; for there be many of the Viſitants, who bring ſome of them freſh Eggs, and others Pullets and Capons, to make Caudles and Broths for the *Virgin*; all which thy lay in the Stable, near to the Image: Others bring Cheeſes and great Bottles of Wine, which they lay

near

near to the Image of S. *Joseph*; and others cast large pieces of Mony into a great Bason, which the *Priests* held out to them, and which (as they tell them) is to be laid out, to buy Necessaries for the Child *Jesus*.

I hapned once to be at *Mentz* in *Germany*, in the Sextry of the Fathers *Jesuits*, with five or six of them. It was a diversion to us, to see the Presents they made to the *Manger*. A poor Country-Fellow (amongst the rest) brought with great Simplicity and Devotion a great Truss of Hay, and laid it down in the Holy Stable, between the *Ox* and the *Ass*; but the *Jesuits* perceiving it, said to one another; *Fie, Fie, this must be taken away immediately, it will prove a very bad Precedent; at this rate they'l bring nothing but Grass and Hay for the Beasts. No, this must not be; they had much better bring good Gammons of Bacon and Neats Tongues for S.* Joseph. The *Sexton* accordingly ran to take it away; but the Country-Man briskly oppos'd him, saying, *That he could not endure to see the* Ox *and the* Ass *die for Hunger, whilst the rest were so well provided.* But they endeavour'd to appease him, by telling him, *That the Child* Jesus *would take care to sustain them by his Divine virtue, rather than that should happen.* Thus, for a miserable and base Interest, they most outragiously Abuse the poor, and keep them in Ignorance, and afterwards to advance their Impiety to the highest degree, they make a Vertue of it, giving it the Name of *Simplicity* and *Innocence*. 'Tis before these sort of *Mangers*, that (according as I have told you in a former LETTER) they set Little Children to Preach.

I have made bold upon this Occaſion to make this ſhort Digreſſion, which I hope will not prove unpleaſing to you. I return now again to our *Proceſſions*, or rather I ſhall conclude this LETTER, in like manner, as I have begun it, by giving you a Relation of another Unveiling of an Image of the *Virgin* I have ſeen at *Milan*, and which (as I was told) was only done once in 50 years. All the Corporations of the City, and of the Neighbouring places, made their Viſits to it Proceſſionally, with Wax-Tapers, Purſes, Preſents, and Ceremonies, not much unlike thoſe I have already related to you. The only thing ſingular in this Uncovering was, That all the while the Image was Unveiled, there was a great Concourſe from all parts of Poſſeſſed perſons, the *Prieſts* being very buſie in all Corners of the Church, to Exorciſe them. The *Papiſts* maintain, That their Prieſts in their Ordination receive the Power of Caſting out Devils, and that the Effect ſhews they are ſucceſsful in it. For my part, I have ſeen very many of theſe Poſſeſſed Perſons, and I have diligently apply'd my ſelf, to ſearch into and examin the Matter; but could never diſcover any able to perſuade me, that thoſe Effects or Operations proceed rather from the Devil, than from a ſtrong Imagination, or ſome violent Diſtemper. Beſides, I ſeldom met with any, but Women that were Poſſeſſed; and I would gladly be inform'd, why the Devil ſhould rather attack them than Men. Indeed, the true Reaſon of this is, That in *Italy* the Women are more than ordinary ſubject to fall into Phrenſies and ſtrange Imaginations. Their Parents, or

their

their Husbands, keep them always ſhut up in their Chambers or Garrets, without permitting them to go abroad, except it be ſometime to Church: And being naturally of an Hot and Amarous Temper, a flattering and pleaſing Object they may by chance have eſpy'd from their Windows, or at Maſs, does ſo far tranſport them, that they are wholly poſſeſt with it, and not with the Devil, as is ſuppoſed. Their Thoughts are ſtrongly fix'd on it Day and Night, and the force of their Imagination, making a wonderful impreſſion upon their Vital Spirits, does extreamly agitate and confound them; and from thence proceed all that diſorder, and thoſe Convulſions that appear in their Bodies.

The Church I ſpeak of was full of this ſort of Poſſeſſed perſons. Amongſt the reſt I perceived in one of the Chappels, a very Beautiful young Gentlewoman, who continually beat her Breaſt with her hand, and cried out, as if ſhe had felt ſomething that would have choak'd her. She had many Prieſts about her, Reading of Exorciſms; but amongſt the reſt there was a very Handſom Prieſt, who did Wonders, and indeed outdid them all. The Poſſeſt Party ſeem'd to have no conſideration for any of the reſt, but for him only, and whenever he touch'd her, the Devil to appearance being overcome by the force of his Exorciſms, left off to Torment her. I was aſtoniſh'd to ſee the Liberty this young Gentleman took with his Poſſeſſed; for ſometimes he would Embrace her Body, he handled her Hands and Arms, and almoſt continually gave her little Flaps on the Cheek. They tell us, That the Devil being

being a proud and haughty Spirit, cannot endure to be humbled; which is the Reason of their Boxing and Affronting the Poſſeſſed. The other Prieſts that were about her, ſometimes ſtretch'd forth their Hands to Box her, (as he did) but ſhe ſhewed her ſelf Enrag'd againſt them, and would not ſuffer them to touch her; ſo that they were fain to content themſelves with abuſing the Devil in Words, whilſt the young Prieſt alone was admitted to Flap her on the Cheek. This Proceeding at laſt ſtirr'd up ſome Jealouſie amongſt themſelves; and one of the Old Prieſts ſaid to this young Blade, in a ſmart way of Raillery, *Dom* Pietro, *I ſee well, that this Devil likes none ſo well as your ſelf; and if I been't much miſtaken, you would well enough agree together.*

But whatever the *Prieſts* of *Rome* may pretend, certain it is, That the Abſolute Power they claim over the Devils, is not ſo evidently verified in them, as they would make the People believe it is. I have ſeen Poſſeſſed Perſons, and Exorciſms pronounced over them in quantity; but I never ſaw any of them freed of their Poſſeſſion by this means. I know 'tis commonly ſaid, There are many Beggars who counterfeit themſelves Poſſeſſed, that by this means they may procure a good Maintenance all their Life after; and as for theſe indeed, I queſtion not but the *Prieſts* have power to deliver them of their Counterfeit Poſſeſſions. This Cheat of the Beggars procures vaſt Credit to their Myſterious Images, which are but once Unveiled in 50 Years time. But I'le leave theſe Poſſeſſed, to come to a Concluſion of what I have ſaid concerning *Popiſh* Pro-

Processions, which they define, as I hinted at the beginning of this LETTER, a *Marching*, or *Walking of the People from one Church to another, under the Conduct of their Priests, with the* Cross *and* Banner, *there to Invoke the Extraordinary Assistance of God.* But indeed and in truth, according to the account now given you of them, does it not appear to you, Sir, That they may with much more right be defin'd, *Pompous and Magnificent Walks, invented on purpose to enhance the Credit and Repute of the* Monks *and* Priests, *and to abuse and gull the People, for their own Advantage?*

We have not the least Footsteps of these kind of *Processions* in the Primitive Centuries of the Church, as being only an Invention of the Popes Brain; and if I been't much mistaken, S. *Gregory* the Great was the first that instituted them at a time of the Plague. In his time they were celebrated with abundance of Modesty; but the Luxury and Ambition of the Clergy have in process of time so much amplified them, that it is as clear as the Sun at Noon-day, they serve for no other use at present, but to give them the Advantage, and make them triumph over the Seculars. Besides, they serve for publick Marks of Honour, whereby they are distinguished amongst themselves. There is nothing they are more jealous of, than their precedency in Processions, the *Priests* and *Monks* oft quarrel with one another on this occasion; and sometimes their Contests break out into great Disorders, as it hapned not long since at *Dijon*, a Parliament City in *France*, where the *Monks* of S. *Bennet* having undertaken

to go a *Proceſſioning*, with great *Canes* in their Hands, as an Enſign of their Authority over the reſt of the Clergy; the Canons of the *Holy Chappel* roſe up againſt them, which occaſion'd a furious Skirmiſh between them, with their *Croſſes* and *Banners*.

The Order obſerv'd in all *Proceſſions*, is, That the Meaneſt march firſt, and thoſe of the higheſt Rank and Quality laſt of all; ſo that the Biſhop is always the laſt Man that ſhuts up the *Proceſſion*. The *Jeſuits* being of ſo late ſtanding in the Church of *Rome*, and not having been able to obtain the Precedency they affected of their Senior Orders, at Proceſſions, have wholly renounced them, and never aſſiſt at them. Only at *Venice*, the Senate obligeth them to go in Proceſſion with the reſt; and to avoid mingling themſelves among the *Prieſts* or *Monks*, they rather chooſe to march amongſt Tradeſmen. The Coblers, Shoemakers, and Taylors, march firſt of all, and after them come the *Jeſuits*, who are followed by the other Trades.

I ſhall here conclude this LETTER, and without detaining you with an ample Moral Application of all this, ſhall only tell you, That foraſmuch as it is ſo apparent and viſible, that theſe kinds of *Proceſſions* in the Church of *Rome*, are only made to ſerve the Ends of Ambition and Temporal Intereſt of the Clergy; that the beſt *Proceſſions* we can make, are not to march from one Church to another; but to advance from one Vertue to another, until we arrive at the Holy Mount of God, *viz.* a Bleſſed Eternity. *Optima Proceſſio ſit procedere de virtute in virtutem, uſque ad Montem Domini.* I remain, Sir,

Yours.

The Eighth LETTER,

Of the Corruption of the Italian *Prieſts and Monks in their Devotion and Morals*, &c.

SIR,

I Have already acquainted you in my Laſt, that my abode for two years together in the City of *Bononia*, at the Abby of S. *Michael* in the *Wood*, afforded me a very favourable Opportunity of penetrating into the Lives and Manners of Monaſticks; and I might have ſtaid there much longer, if the perſuaſions of a Noble *Venetian* had not prevail'd with me, to go with him to *Venice*. It ſeems, as if a Divine Providence had conducted me thither, to put me in a ſtation where I might take a nearer view of the conduct and converſation of other Eccleſiaſticks, commonly called *Secular Prieſts*; not ſo much, becauſe I was ignorant before of their way of Life, having been always brought up amongſt them, and one of them; but becauſe I found a conſiderable deal of difference between the Secular Clergy of *Italy*, and thoſe of *France*, amongſt whom I had my Education. The former

of these live without any Restraint, and without being much observ'd or taken notice of by their own Countrymen, whom they have corrupted as well in their Practice, as in their Principles, as I shall more particularly make out to you in the Sequel hereof; whereas the latter, (that is to say, the Ecclesiasticks of *France*) have studied the Art of *Dissimulation*, and are more upon their Guard, to avoid their being expos'd to the Censure of *Protestants*, whom they regard as so many Spies upon them.

I was no sooner arrived at *Venice*, but I had the good luck to procure my self the Protection of some of the most considerable Persons in that Republick; so that in less than a Months time I was provided of three Small Benefices, in Three different Churches, which gave me an occasion of Conversing with a vast number of Clergymen of all Nations, who Resort to this City of Liberty, there to enjoy the Pleasures of this Life. After I had staid Three years here, I undertook another Journy to *Rome*, having been drawn thither by the Promises of a Cardinal, who died Eight Days after my Arrival there. This unlook'd for Accident having defeated the Hopes I had formed of making a longer stay in that City, I departed thence some Months after: Having Visited before the City of *Naples*, I took my Journy towards *Milan*, without any design of making any stay there; but the persuasion of some Noblemen of that Country made me change my Resolution. The Abbot of Great *St. Victor*, amongst others, made me very considerable Offers,

Offers, to oblige me to ſtay in his Abby, and to take upon me the Care of Inſtructing his Religious, according as he knew I had done in the Abby of S. *Michael*, in *Bononia*, that was of the ſame Order as his; which at length induc'd me to yield to his Deſire. By this means I found my ſelf anew engag'd with *Monks*.

I have here on this Occaſion, Sir, hinted to you ſeveral parts of *Italy*, where I have made my Abode for ſome time, and the Employments I have had there; but without the leaſt intent of Boaſting my ſelf on that account, but only to inform you, that what I take upon me to ſpeak here concerning the *Prieſts* and *Monks*, is from a thorough Knowledge and Experience, as having had abundant Opportunities to make thoſe Obſervations, which many (who have handled the ſame Subject,) have been wholly depriv'd of. I have had ſeveral other Employments, both in *Italy* and *Germany*, which I might with more Reaſon boaſt of, if I was ſo minded; but they having no reference to the Subject in hand, I paſs them by in Silence. Tho' indeed it be not altogether out of the way, for one in my Circumſtances, to make mention of the Employments he has had beyond the Seas, and the Honourable way of Subſiſtence he has been in, if it were only to confute the Calumnies the *Papiſts* are wont to caſt upon the Prieſts of thir Religion, who leave their Communion, to ſatisfie their Conſciences by joyning themſelves to that of the Reformed Churches: Their common Cry is, That ſuch are either meer Vagabonds, or Perſons that

had nothing to live on at home in their own Country, and who were weary of the condition they were in, for want of ſome good Benefice wherewith plentifully to maintain themſelves; or elſe, that it is nothing but a Spirit of *Libertiniſm*, that prompts them to make this Change. This laſt Aſperſion being the moſt odious and reflecting of all, made me very careful (when I was in *Italy*) to obviate it, by taking Atteſtations of my Good Behaviour and Manners from all the places where I had made any ſtay, that I might have them in a readineſs, to clear my ſelf from any ſuch Reproach, in caſe any ſhould be found Malicious enough to rank me in that Number; ſo that indeed (by the Grace and Goodneſs of God) I may now ſpeak boldly and openly, without the leaſt danger or apprehenſion from the moſt envenom'd Tongues. Yet for all this, I muſt profeſs, that the Subject of this Laſt LETTER is very averſe to my Natural Humor and Inclination, *viz.* to expoſe the Vices and Defects of others: But yet, when I conſider on the other hand, that *Jeſus Chriſt* oft declaim'd very ſeverely againſt the Hypocriſie of the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* of his Time, and this, to inform the People, and deter them from following their ways; I conclude, it cannot be unlawful (upon good ground and occaſions) to publiſh the Sins of thoſe, who are not only the main Corrupters of the Morality, but alſo of the Principles and Doctrins of the Goſpel, to the end, we may oblige others, to be warned and take heed of them, as of *Wolves in Sheeps cloathing*; *Cavete à fermento Phariſæorum*;

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Take heed of the Leaven of the Phariſees. By this means alſo it will appear, what uſe is made of all thoſe vaſt Sums of Mony, which accrue to the Prieſts of the Church of *Rome*, by thoſe Subtil Inventions and Religious Artifices wherewith I have entertain'd you in my Fore-going LETTERS: For it is evident, that *Gold* and *Silver* can ſerve only for the uſe of Men; and by the uſe they make of it, we may eaſily judge of the End they propounded to themſelves, in ſearching for the Means to obtain it.

Having therefore more eſpecially apply'd my ſelf (during my Abode in *Italy*) to find out the Ways the *Prieſts* and *Monks* had, to diſpoſe of and ſpend their vaſt Revenues, I found, that it was only to ſatisfie and glut their Domineering Appetites, Luſts, and Paſſions. Some of them are ſuch Idolaters of *Mammon*, that the more they heap up, the leſs they think themſelves poſſeſt of; and thus dye (like little *Cræſus*'s, or rather like bad Rich Men) in the midſt of their Riches, from which nothing but Death could ſeparate them. 'Tis the common Cry of the Poor in that Country, That nothing can be more inexorable, more inſenſible, or more pityleſs than the Clergy. 'Tis meer Labour loſt, to addreſs ones ſelf to them for an Alms; for at the beſt one meets with a Denial, and very often with Scornful and Taunting Words: So that their *Covetouſneſs* is like an unſatiable Gulf, which ſwallows all, and gives up nothing again. I have known ſeveral Prieſts, who had their Coffers full of *Gold*, and notwithſtanding grutch'd themſelves a piece of dry Bread;

and ſome of theſe were ſo dextrous, as to make their ſordid *Avarice*, paſs for a Love of *Abſtinence* and *Mortification*; but in the mean time were ſo far from beſtowing the leaſt Alms on the Poor, that they could not endure that any one ſhould ask them a *Charity*; whence it was obvious to make this diſcovery, That ſo fair a Vertue as *Abſtinence* is, could not be the Inmate of ſuch ſordidly Covetous Breaſts: For according to that Saying, *Sublevamen Pauperis ſit Abſtinentia Jejunantis*; *The Abſtinence of him that Faſts, ought to be a Relief for the Poor.*

Others beſtow their Mony in Building Palaces for themſelves; I ſay, *Palaces*; for tho indeed it would much better become their Profeſſion, to provide for themſelves Houſes, in which ſome Marks of that Chriſtian Humility might be diſcerned, which is ſo indiſpenſable a Qualification of Miniſters of the Altar; yet ſo far are they from this Temper, that they ſpare no Coſt to erect for themſelves moſt ſtately and ſumptuous Fabricks, beyond the Magnificence of the Palaces of the greateſt Princes. For proof of what I here alledge, we need only caſt an Eye upon all the Monaſteries of *Italy*; and thoſe who have Travell'd thoſe Countries know, That the faireſt Palace which is found near the Church, is always the Curates Houſe. Others conſume their Revenues in Making much of Themſelves, and contriving Ways for their Pleaſure and Diverſion: For ſeeing they have no Families to provide for, *It would be a Profanation*, ſay they, *of the Gifts of God*, (ſo they call the immenſe Riches

they

they have got by their Maſſes) *in caſe they ſhould not make uſe of them, to make much of themſelves in this World, who do ſo much good to the Souls of Purgatory in the other.* For this Reaſon it is we ſee their Tables ſo deliciouſly and profuſely cover'd, and that they Entertain one another by Turns with ſuch Exquiſitneſs, Splendor, and Magnificence; inſomuch that their inclination this way has authoriz'd that Proverbial Expreſſion, ſo common in *Italy*, by which they call any extraordinary Dainty; *Boccone di Preti ò di Cardinali*; *A Bit for a Prieſt or Cardinal.* What I have here ſaid concerning thoſe Objects that pleaſe the Pallat, is to be underſtood proportionably concerning all other things that do any way contribute to a delicious and luxurious Life, which they take care to procure for themſelves with a ſuperfluous profuſeneſs, altogether inexcuſable. Should any many be tempted with a deſire to ſee the very utmoſt height of Vanity, of Wantonneſs, and of Effeminacy, he needs only to take a View of the Court of *Rome*; which, as it is compoſed only of *Prieſts* and *Monks*; ſo its boaſts it ſelf, of ſurpaſſing in Gallantry, Pomp, and Magnificence, thoſe of the greateſt and moſt potent Monarchs of the Earth.

Here you will find Biſhops that have two or three Biſhopricks, and Abbots that have five or ſix Abbies apiece. 'Tis a kind of diſgrace for an Eccleſiaſtick, to have no more than one Benefice; for indeed without a great Revenue, one can make no Figure in this Court of *Prieſts*. Yea, the Vanity of this Court is mounted to that Exceſs, that the Mem-

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bers of it are ſo far from Bluſhing at it, that they make it the principal Matter of their glory and boaſting. A *Cardinal* or a *Biſhop* does not make an Hunting Match, does not Feaſt his Conſorts, but the whole World forſooth muſt Ring of it. All the Gazets we have from *Rome* are ſtuft full of ſuch Vanities as theſe, That *my Lord the Cardinal* N. *has given a Viſit to one of his Colleagues*; That *another was at the* Opera; *or caus'd a Rich Livery to be made for his Retinue, and appear'd in publick with a Train of ſo many Coaches.* I have oft made it my diverſion, whilſt I was at *Rome*, to ſee the *Cardinals* (on Sunday Mornings) Ride to the *Vatican*, when the Pope held Chappel there. They are trick'd up like ſo many Scarlet Puppets in their Coaches, and all their Creatures are about them, with an Air that proclaims them extreamly Effeminate and Wanton. After all, I confeſs, a Man muſt needs have a very ſtrong Faith to believe, that this ſort of People are no ſooner met together in a Chamber, but the *Holy Ghoſt* is inſtantly in the midſt of them, to give Law to the Conſciences of all Men. If to meet together with ſuch Exceſs of Ambition and Vanity, be to Meet in the Name of the Lord, 'tis certain our Saviour *Jeſus Chriſt*, who appeared in ſo mean and humble a condition, did not come into the World in the ſame Name. Every Cardinal has his Nephew or Neareſt Kinſman with him, who holds his Scarlet-Hat in the Boot of the Coach; which is a ſignal Honour to him, and a Mark of his being the moſt beloved Creature of the Cardinal.

'Tis

'Tis this *Nepotiſm*, that made ſuch a Noiſe in the Time of the late Pope *Innocent* the XI*th*, and which he (who, to give him his due, was a Man ſevere enough in his Morals) reſolved wholly to extirpate, having begun the Reformation in his own Houſe; but we ſee now, that things are quietly and without Noiſe return'd to their old Channel. All the Endeavours of Pope *Innocent* the XI*th* were only like the ſprinkling of a little cold Water upon Red-hot Iron, which ſerves only to make it more fiery and glowing: And, for my part, I muſt own, That I cannot conceive how a Church (where Fleſh and Blood ride ſo glouriouſly Triumphant, and prevail to that exceſſive Degree) can ever have the Face to boaſt, That the *Gates of Hell ſhall never prevail againſt Her*. This *Nepotiſm*, or Exaltation of their Nephews, does not only take place at the Court of *Rome*, but (whether from Imitation, or by Natural inclination of promoting thoſe who are nearly related to us) we find it obtain amongſt all the reſt of the Clergy, who are not perfect Slaves to Avarice, or the love of Pleaſure. They think of nothing elſe, but how they may enrich thoſe of their Family, whoſe Humor pleaſeth them beſt. I confeſs indeed, that this is the moſt commendable and moſt innocent way of employing their Treaſure, as carrying ſome appearance of Charity in it; tho' (to ſpeak Truth) we can never make a Chriſtian Vertue of it, as being common to us with the Heathens themſelves: The *Turks* do good to thoſe of their Kindred and Friends, as well as the *Prieſts* of the Church of *Rome*, and probably alſo do it during

their

their Lives, which these latter are very seldom found guilty of, because they commonly do not dispose of their Riches to those of their Family, till they see Death ready to snatch them from them. This *Nepotism* therefore is a vast Gulf, which swallows a great part of the Ecclesiastical Revenue; but there is another Abyss that devours incomparably much more, and in a way that is not only a Scandal and Reproach to their Profession, but even to Nature it self; and, is in a word, the abominable Commerce they drive with both Sexes.

All the World knows that it is not lawful for the *Priests* and *Monks* of the Church of *Rome* to Marry, as having protested against Marriage at their Ordination, and in their several Professions and Orders, as against *a thing* (to use their own terms) *which defiles and polluts a Man, and makes him incapable of duly and purely serving at the Altar.* 'Tis upon this Principle they refuse to Marry, and the Priest that can be convict of violating this Law, must be burnt alive. But for all this their Huffing, they perceive well enough, that all this while they reckon without their Host, and this great Undertaking of theirs proves quite another thing in effect, than it was in Speculation. Take but a little leisure to Read their Lives, and you'l find, they have no sooner made their Vow of *Chastity*; but they study and invent (with all the Application imaginable) how to break it. They have voluntarily debarr'd themselves from honest and lawful Wedlock, and must now betake themselves to Fornication, Adultery, Incest, and Sacriledge, to satisfie

ſatisfie their Concupiſcence, and glut their infamous Luſts.

Now to do this, there muſt be Mony, becauſe the Debauched Sex is doubly concern'd for having to do with them, and therefore do not afford them ſo good Quarters as they do to others; and their Wenches have the Boldneſs to tell them, That *ſince it is a greater Sin to have to do with them, than with others, 'tis but juſt they ſhould pay accordingly.* The Clergy therefore finding that the World carries it ſomewhat Uncivil towards them in this regard, and groaning to ſee themſelves in a condition to ſtand in need of them, reſolve on their ſide (as far as poſſible) to be even with them; and accordingly they will not Say a Maſs, or Prayer, or go a ſtep upon any ſcore whatſoever, without being well paid for it. If they be ſent for to Baptize an Infant, to Exhort a Sick Body, or to Bury a Corpſe, they firſt demand what they will give them for their pains, and budge not till the Bargain be made. They ſollicit for Mony towards their Confraternities, their Feſtivals, Proceſſions, Benedictions, and Devotions for the Souls in *Purgatory*, with incredible Importunity and earneſtneſs, as being a prompt and effectual Expedient, to fill their Purſes. There is nothing diſquiets them more, than the perſuaſion which poſſeſſeth the Sex they Love, That *to have to do with Men conſecrated to God*, (as they are) *is a kind of Sacriledge, and the worſt of all Crimes.* This indeed is a Conſequence, which very plainly follows from their Principles; but which they notwithſtanding endeavour to Veil as much

much as ever they can. You ſeldom hear them Preaching againſt Wanntoneſs, Incontinence, Adultery, &c. and, if at any time they do, 'tis without being Invective, and ſo as to diminiſh the Horrour any one might have conceiv'd of theſe Crimes. Yea, ſome of them are arriv'd to that degree of Impudence, to publiſh, That *theſe are the moſt Innocent of all other Vices; and that God conſidering, that they are born and grown up with us, and have their riſe from the Blood and Body that ſurrounds us, is very ready to forgive and pardon them.* They ſay, *That ſuch Sins as theſe are Inſtances of Human frailty; and provided a perſon be only convinc'd of his Weakneſs therein, Confeſs them, and be humbled for them, 'tis enough; and one* Ave Mary, *or the ſign of the* Croſs, *with a ſprinkling of* Holy-Water, *is all the Penance that is ordinarily enjoyn'd for ſuch* Peccadillo's *as theſe.*

They are wont alſo, to treat Seculars very ſmoothly in this Point, at their *Confeſſions*, and in particular the Female Sex; *Leſt* (ſay they) *by treating them too harſhly, they might be diſcouraged another time to Confeſs them with all their Circumſtances.* But the true Reaſon is, that in ſo doing they may oblige the Seculars, to be as favourable towards them in their Cenſures on the like occaſion, and that they may not be too ſtrictly obſerv'd themſelves, when they fall into the ſame Crimes. Indeed Auricular and Secret Confeſſion, is the moſt commodious way the Prieſts have, to lodge their Game; 'tis there they put Women to the Queſtion, and by this means accuſtoming them (by little and little) from

from their Youth up, to ſpeak with Confidence of their ſecret Sins, they make them at length loſe that Natural Shamefac'dneſs, which otherwiſe they would be ſenſible of, in making the leaſt mention of ſuch Filthineſs. Being therefore by this means inform'd of their Inclinations and Weak-ſide, if they find them to be of an Amorous Complexion, it is an eaſie thing for them to ſpeak for themſelves, and to inſinuate their own Paſſion. It is notoriouſly evident, that commonly none but Women go to Confeſſion; for as for Men, they ſeldom uſe it more than once a Year, and that towards *Eaſter*. The Reaſon whereof having been once ask'd in my preſence, a Perſon of a very good Senſe, return'd this Anſwer, *That the Reaſon why none but Women were ſeen to Confeſs, was, becauſe Men were Confeſſors; but, that if Women were once poſſeſt of the Chair of Confeſſion, we ſhould ſoon find the contrary, and that none but Men would appear before them.* The Reaſon is, becauſe Women for the moſt part take pleaſure in their Confeſſing, being well aſſured, that their Confeſſors will put ſuch Queſtions to them, as cannot much diſpleaſe them; and knowing, that how openly ſoever they may declare their Sins, the Seal of Confeſſion will always put them out of danger of running any Riſque thereby: Yea, there are not wanting a vaſt Number of thoſe, who relying upon the Secrecy of this Tribunal, and encouraged by the Exhortations of their Prieſts, of hiding nothing from them, no not ſo much as their impure Thoughts, make no difficulty ingenuouſly to declare, That they Love them; that they can

neither

neither by Day nor Night rid their Spirit from runing out after them; and their Amorous Temptations are ſo violent, that except God be pleaſed to Reſtrain them, or they take ſome Compaſſion on them, it will make them infallibly go Mad and Diſtracted.

The Men (eſpecially in *Italy*) go but ſeldom to Confeſſion, becauſe they do not love to be Queſtion'd or Examin'd about their Amours. A *Capuchin* Fryer (who was very Ugly, and the very picture of a Satyr, with his great Beard) told me once Smiling, That his Confeſſion-Seat was a Scare-Crow to Women; but that, to make amends for that, he was the great Confeſſor of Jealous Lovers. His meaning was, That Women did not care to Confeſs to him, becauſe he was Ugly; but that on the other hand, Men did chooſe to Confeſs to him the rather, becauſe he was ſo, as judging him incapable of Injuring them by becoming their Rival. A Confeſſor, who has a deſign to make a bad uſe of his Miniſterial Funetion, may eaſily find means, by the Queſtions he can put, and to which his Penitent is oblig'd to Anſwer, to diſcover the perſon he ſpeaks of, and accordingly may afterwards find means of attempting her.

A young Noble *Venetian* having been upon a time too indiſcreetly Queſtion'd by a Monk in his Confeſſion, where his Miſtreſs [illegible], Swore, he would never Confeſs upon that point any more, except it were at the point of Death, or at leaſt when he ſhould be weary of his Miſſes, and no more apprehend, to have a Competitor in his Love.

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I have been told by ſeveral Gentlewomen, That Confeſſors have come to Viſit them in their Houſes, being led thither only by the Light they have got from the Confeſſion of their Penitents. This *Confeſſion* is one of the New Sacraments of the Church of *Rome*, and we ſee to what goodly Ends it is made uſe of, and the Intereſt the *Prieſts* and *Monks* have to preſerve it. This is that which makes them ſo boldly to proteſt againſt Marriage, which they care ſo little for; the Corruption of Mans Nature being ſo great, that it repreſents Sin more ſweet and pleaſant to him, than that which is honeſt and lawful.

I remember a Saying of a Regular Abbot of a Monaſtery in *Italy*, who talking with me about Women, ſaid, *Melius eſt habere nullam quam aliquam*; That *it was better to have none than any*; And having demanded of him what he meant by thoſe Words; *Becauſe* (ſaid he) *when a perſon is not tied to one, he may make uſe of many.* This you'l ſay was a fine piece of Morality; and, to give this Prelate his due, his Practice was very Conformable to his Doctrin. He Entertain'd above a Score of Women with the Revenues of his Abby; he had many Country-Houſes, which he turn'd into as many Brothel-Houſes for himſelf and his Friends, where he ſplendidly Entertain'd them; and the exceſſive Expences he was at in theſe places of Pleaſure, procur'd him the Surname of *Liberal*. But he was not of the ſame Humor towards his poor Farmers, who labour'd hard to make the beſt of his Incoms, and to Till his Ground; for he was to

them an inſatiable Exactor and Oppreſſor, inſomuch as they could ſcarcely get out of him ſome part of the Mony, which was of Right due to them. Theſe poor Men finding themſelves ſo ill Treated by him, reſolved on a time to have their full Revenge of him, and to play their Maſter ſuch a Malicious Trick, as he might have Reaſon to remember ever after. They knew very well the Archbiſhop was a ſworn Enemy to *Monks* and *Abbots*, and therefore queſtion'd not, but They would find him in a diſpoſition of favouring their Enterprize. They went therefore and complain'd to him, of a Scandalous Life their Abbot led, who was at that time Three Leagues diſtant from *Bononia*, at one of his Country-Houſes, with Three young Women, who lay in the ſame Bed with him every Night. The Archbiſhop having taken their Information, loſt no time, but the ſame Evening, ſent away all his Marſhalſey, compos'd of the *Barigel* or Provoſt, and Threeſcore *Sbirries* or Serjeants well Arm'd, with Orders to ſeize the Abbot, and the Women that were with him. They arrived at the Abbots Country-Houſe but a moment after he was gone to Bed. The Farmers, who had the Word, and the Keys of all the Doors, made the Provoſt, with his *Sbirries*, enter to rights into the Prelates Chamber; who (you may eaſily imagin) was extreamly ſurpriz'd with this unwelcom and unlook'd for Viſit. He deſir'd to compound with the Provoſt, and the *Sbirries*, as he had often done before; and to perſuade them the better, open'd to them a Purſe full of Gold; but their Orders were too expreſs to be ſo eluded, and the Farmers, who out of

of pure Revenge had ſolicited the Seizing of their Landlord, were in preſence, and would not have fail'd to give in their full Information concerning all that had paſſed, to the Archbiſhop: So the *Barigel* and *Sbirries* (tho' People otherwiſe of baſe and covetous Minds) upon this occaſion ſhew'd a forced Reſolution, not to be corrupted by the Prelates Gold. Accordingly they took the Abbot ſtark Naked, as he was, without ſuffering him to put any thing upon him, beſides a Morning-Gown; and in this Equipage having Mounted him with his Three Concubines, upon an old Cart they found in a back-Yard of the Houſe, they tied them all together Back to Back, and thus led them in Triumph in the moſt ignominious and reproachful manner into the City of *Bononia*, before the Archbiſhop. It was about Midnight when they arrived, and the thick Darkneſs of the Night favour'd the poor Abbot very much, ſparing him a great deal of Confuſion, he would otherwiſe have been put to. The Archbiſhop ſeeing him in this condition fell a Laughing, and by way of Raillery told him, *That ſince it was not lawful for him to take any Cognizance of the Affairs of Monks, he was willing ſo far to honour them, as to make themſelves the Judges of their Brethren*; and ſo order'd him with his Wenches, at that very inſtant, to be carried in the ſame poſture to S. *Michael in the Wood*, a Monaſtery of the ſame Order, about a Canon-Shot diſtance from the City. It was about One of the Clock in the Morning when all this goodly Train arrived there. The *Sbirries* Knock'd with that

violence at the great Gates of the Monaſtery, and made ſuch a Hallowing and Shouting, that the Abbot himſelf was fain to Riſe, and to go (accompanied by all his Monks) to the great Gate, where he met with a Sight he had little dreamt of. He at firſt would not acknowledge the Old Abbot for his Brother, upon pretext forſooth he was in his Night-Gown, without the Habit of his Order, and refus'd to receive him into the Monaſtery: But the *Sbirries* told him, *That if he was ſo reſolv'd, they had no more to do, but to carry him back again to the Archbiſhop, who would not fail to ſend for his Habit, and to ſend him back the next day at High Noon in his Prelates Habit, and accompanied with his Doxies, as now he was.* The Abbot perceiving, that nothing could be gain'd this way, but a double Reproach and Confuſion, commanded his Fryers, to go and unlooſe him, and ſo admitted him into the Monaſtery, and let the Women go. The Penance impos'd upon this Abbot, for the Affront and Scandal he had given, was this; To abide 15 Days in the Monaſtery without ſtirring abroad: Which was the more eaſie for him to ſubmit to, becauſe the Noiſe of his gallant Story being ſpread through the whole City, he could not well any ſooner without great Shame and Confuſion) have appear'd in the Streets. The General, who might eaſily have Depos'd him from his Charge of Abbot, was of Opinion, That for ſo light a Fault as this, it was not worth the pains to proceed to ſo rigid a Cenſure; and thus by a Spirit of *Charity*, which will not permit us to do that to another, which we

would

would not have others do to us, eſpecially when we find our ſelves in the ſame Circumſtances, contented himſelf to make him exchange his Abby for ſome time, and Entertain'd him at his own Monaſtery of Mount *Olivet*.

I have given you a true and faithful Relation of this Hiſtory, as having been an Eye-witneſs of part of it my ſelf, becauſe it hapned during the time that I was in the Monaſtery of S. *Michael in the Wood*. This Accident gave me the occaſion of making a very pleaſant Diſcovery; for upon the *Sbirries* entring into the Monaſtery, a young Religious being extreamly affrighted, and apprehending leſt they might make a narrow ſearch into his Chambers, where for Three Weeks time he had kept a young Laſs, came directly to me; and without much conſidering to whom he addreſt himſelf, deſir'd me, for the Love of God, to hide his Miſtreſs in one of the moſt private Chambers of my Apartment, until the Storm were over. But notwithſtanding the extream Earneſtneſs wherewith he ſolicited my Conſent, I did not think it fit to expoſe my own Credit, to ſave his; and knowing withal how dangerous it is, to give a downright Refuſal to an *Italian*, and more eſpecially to a Monk; I in the mildeſt way I could, wiſh'd him to Addreſs himſelf to the Apothecary of the Abby, who was a young Man of his own Country, and who was not ſo ſcrupulous in that point, as I was: The Religious following my Counſel, found the Apothecary very ready to comply with his deſire, and without making any difficulty, took her from

him, and ſhut her up in one of the Large Preſſes of his Shop; where ſhe continued the reſt of that Night, and the Day following, in deadly Fears. The young Monk came to me the next Morning, to Excuſe himſelf, and (as 'tis likely) being troubled that he had given me an occaſion, (by the diſcovery he had made to me) to believe, That the reſt of his Brethren were better than he; he took the freedom to diſcover to me ſeveral things, which till then I was ignorant of, tho' I had now already continued ſix Months amongſt them: He told me, *That moſt of his Brethren had their Wenches, whom they kept in their Chambers; and that they got them in from abroad from time to time, where they kept them, ſome a Week, others a Fortnight, or a Month, according to the Bargain they had made with them, and the Ability of their Purſe: The Abbot himſelf was not ignorant of it; but prevalent Cuſtom had reduc'd things to that paſs amongſt them, that he was fain to wink at all, and content himſelf with the Preſents they made him from time to time for ſo doing: The moſt convenient time they had to get their Wenches into the Abby, was about the beginning of the Night; who being come to a place (according to Appointment) and preciſely at ſuch an Hour; the Monks, who had ſent for them, brought them Cowls and Frocks, and ſo dreſs'd them in their own Habit; which done, theſe good Fryers entred all without diſtinction into the Monaſtery, in greater Number than they were gone out.*

I had indeed formerly often been ſurpriz'd, to ſee ſeveral new Figures of Monks entring into the Dormi-

Dormitories, which I had never ſeen before; and upon my Enquiry, they had always made me believe, that they were ſome Stranger-Monks, that were come to Lodge with them. Moſt of the Religious have double Rooms, whereby they have a great Convenience of Entertaining their Women unperceiv'd. The Abbots make their Profit of it; for a Religious cannot have one of theſe Double-Chambers, without paying about an Hundred Crowns for it; and they are very well acquainted what it is deſign'd for; but provided their Religious only take care, to manage the Matter ſo, as that it may not come to the knowledge of Seculars, they do not trouble themſelves about it; neither doth this hinder them from being advanced to Religious Charges and Employments, as much as if they were the Holieſt perſons of the World.

I was acquainted at *Venice* with a Regular Canon of the Abby of S. *Saviour*, who was a young Man of conſiderable Learning, and who publickly taught Philoſophy. This Man entertain'd the moſt infamous Whore that was in the whole City, and who commonly ſerv'd for a Model to the Limners of the Academy. It was above a Year that he had had commerce with her, and his Abbot gave him leave (every Evening) during *Shrovetide*, to dreſs himſelf in Maſquerade, and to go to her Lodging, and lead her thence to the *Opera* or *Comedy*; after which, he either brought her along with him to his Chamber in the Monaſtery, or elſe paſt the reſt of the Night with her at her own Lodging. Now, as long as the Matter was carried ſecretly, and without

making any Noiſe abroad, the Abbot let the young Monk take his ſwing, without giving him the leaſt Check or Reproof for it; and having a particular Kindneſs for him, he had already diſpos'd all things in order to his being choſen Abbot; when (by Ill-luck for this young Fryer) a great number of Artizans, who lived in the ſame Street with this Courtizan, and who probably were diſpleaſed with his frequent Viſits to her, came and made their Complaints to the Monaſtery. The Abbot having heard what they had to ſay, endeavour'd what he could to ſweeten them, and to excuſe the Monk; but all this did but incenſe them the more; and the next Sunday they gather'd together in the Church, near to the Chappel where this young Religious was wont to ſay Maſs, being reſolved publickly to Affront him, and to ſtop him from going up to the Altar; but the Abbot having notice of it, ſent them a piece of Mony, to make them deſiſt from proſecuting their Deſign; whereupon they retir'd without more ado: But the Abbot perceiving the thing had taken Wind, and was become the publick Talk of the City, thought it now high time to declare himſelf againſt the Monk; and notwithſtanding he had never before given him the leaſt Reproof for this high Miſdemeanour, he then wrote a Letter to the Father General of the Order, to deprive him of his Salary; and about a Fortnight after there came an Order, by which he was put out of his place of Philoſophy Lecturer, and ſent away to a ſmall Monaſtery in the Country. His Crime, as far as I could ſearch into the matter,

was

was not for having Entertain'd an infamous Familiarity with a Common Proſtitute, for this his Superiour had been well acquainted with a year ago; but his Fault was, That he had been ſo unhappy, not to uſe that Caution, as to prevent its coming to publick Knowledge.

Italy, without contradiction, is accounted by all for a very Corrupt and Debauch'd Country; and it is as ſure, that the *Prieſts* and *Monks* (a ſort of People, who have Vowed *Eternal Chaſtity*) are the main occaſion of her being branded with this juſt Reproach. The immenſe Treaſures they poſſeſs, are a Scandal and Stumbling-Stone unto them, and Looſe-Women, who are not ignorant of this, account themſelves happy to be taken into their Favour; it being a Proverb in *Italy*, That *the Wench of a Prieſt, or Monk, can never want any thing*. The Monks, beſides the Vow of *Chaſtity*, have alſo taken upon them that of *Poverty*, and accordingly ought never to poſſeſs any Mony of their own; but the Avarice of the Popes of *Rome* have made them, in direct oppoſition to their Vow, *Proprietors*. To what purpoſe is it, to cover the Inſtitution of Monaſtick Orders under the fair pretext of leading a more Perfect and a more Chriſtian Life, than Secular Men do; when it is ſo apparent, that the principal Motive of their Inſtitution was the filling of the Pope's Coffers, and the enriching of the Prelates of the Court of *Rome*? Let any one go and ſearch as long as they pleaſe in Cloiſters for that Spirit of *Chaſtity*, *Poverty*, and *Obedience*, which in them is exprelſly profeſſed, and

after

after all, 'tis certain he will find there leſs of theſe than in many Secular Families: But ſure it is, the Pope always finds them ready to furniſh him with what Sum of Mony he ſtands in need of. The Reaſon why the Popes inſtitute ſo many New Orders, is, becauſe they are morally certain, they will not ſtand long, without falling and departing from the Rules and Strictneſs of their firſt Inſtitution, and that this will make way for their Suppreſſion, which cannot but be of vaſt advantage to them. 'Tis not long ſince that one Pope ſuppreſſed Three of them all at once, *viz.* the Order of S. *Jerom*, that of the *Jeſuats*, and that of the *Waters*, who likewiſe profeſſed the Rule of S. *Jerom*. The Inſtitution of this laſt Order was a very pleaſant one, and their *Exit* was as ridiculous.

The Firſt Fathers of this Order being *Inſpired* (as they ſaid) *by the Holy Ghoſt*, ſet themſelves to Diſtil Waters and Spirits, for the relief and ſervice of poor Sick People; and this their *Diſtilling of Waters*, was their Character of diſtinction from others, and made them to be call'd *Fathers of the Waters*. A ſhort time after, all this Spirituality was reduced to a Diſtilling of *Beautifying Waters* for Ladies, to make their Hands white, and to preſerve or augment their Beauty. All theſe Three Orders were become extreamly Rich and Scandalous, when the Pope thought fit to ſuppreſs them, and to unite to the Patrimony of the Church all their Poſſeſſions, giving their Churches to other Monks, who at the bottom were ne're a whit better, than thoſe they were taken from. This was indeed a very rude

rude Treatment for them, thus at once to diveſt them of all their Revenues and Incoms, and to force them, tho' ſore againſt their Will, to the practice of their Vow of *Poverty*, by reducing them to Beggary, and the Charitable Benevolence of their Friends and Acquaintance. This is that which makes the Monks ſo much to dread theſe Suppreſſions; and the Popes, who are not ignorant of it, have nothing to do, but to threaten them therewith, whenever they have a mind to ſqueez a conſiderable Sum of Mony from them; which Method the late Pope *Innocent* the XI*th* ſeveral times put in practice, as well againſt the Order of the Canons Regular, as ſeveral other Congregations of the Order of S. *Bennet*.

The Order of Mount *Olivet* alone, at one time, made him a Preſent of an Hundred Thouſand Crowns, to appeaſe his Anger; tho' it was not long before this, that another Pope had ſqueez'd out of them, by the ſame Artifice, the Sum of 400000 Crowns; and becauſe for this Reaſon it was impoſſible for them to raiſe that Sum in Ready Mony, within the ſhort term was allotted them for it, he gave them leave to engage their Fonds, and to Mortgage the Land belonging to their Monaſtery; which they did accordingly, and making a dextrous uſe of this Conjuncture, by ſtriking whilſt the Iron was hot, they deſired of the Pope, whom they found at that time in a good Humor, to give them leave to receive Penſions from their Kindred and Relations, and of poſſeſſing Land in Propriety; which was in effect to requeſt, That notwithſtanding their

Vow

Vow of *Perpetual Poverty*, it might be lawful for them, to be as Rich as any other Seculars; and yet as contradictory to their Vow, as their Requeſt was, the Pope had the Conſcience to grant it, not only to them, but to all other Religious Houſes, from whence he drew vaſt Sums of Mony.

This is that which at this day makes the Monks of *Italy* ſo full of Mony, and ſo well Lin'd; for beſides the competent Allowance they have for their Subſiſtence from the Monaſtery, they enjoy beſides conſiderable Annual Penſions from their Families, which they ſpend at their pleaſure, and to ſatisfie their Luſts. I have known ſome of them my ſelf, that had no leſs than 1000 *l.* Sterling, Annual Penſion. The Cardinals perceiving that the Popes draw ſo conſiderable Advantage from Religious Orders, are not wanting on their ſide, to make them as profitable to themſelves, as they can; and to this end have found out the way of Selling them their Protection, for as much Mony as they can raiſe them to. Each Order has its Cardinal Protector, to whom they allow an Annual Penſion of 3 or 4000 Crowns; and this, for to obtain their Favour and Protection at the Court of *Rome*, upon occaſion. The Abbots of the Congregation of Mount *Olivet*, finding that *Innocent* the XI*th* was reſolved to ſuppreſs them, or at leaſt made a ſhew to be ſo, they immediately had recourſe to their Protector, the Cardinal *Faſchinetti*; they writ a Letter to him, wherein they declar'd, the great Danger in which their Congregation was, and earneſtly entreated him, to make uſe of all his Credit with the Pope,

to

to ſtave off this fatal Blow from them, and that in conſideration of this his ſeaſonable Service, they would augment his Penſion with the additional Supplement of 1000 Crowns a Year. I was preſent at the very time when the Cardinal opened this Letter, and having read the Promiſe they made him of 1000 Crowns Augmentation, he Cry'd out in a moſt tender and affectionate Tone; *Ah my Dear Congregation of Mount* Olivet, *I will never ſuffer it to be ſaid, That ſo great an Affront ſhould happen unto thee, whilſt I am thy Protector*; and immediately thereupon ſent his Secretary to the *Vatican*, to deſire Audience of the Pope, upon a Matter that was extreamly preſſing, and of great importance. He had the good luck to be admitted to Audience, at the very time when the Act for Suppreſſing the Order, was actually Drawing up. His Eminence caſt himſelf at the Pope's Feet, and told him Weeping, *That if he did proceed in his Reſolution, it would certainly be his Death.* The Pope ſeeing him in this poſture, lifted him up with a great deal of Kindneſs, and the Cardinal being his old Friend, he Promis'd, *That for his ſake he would not ſuppreſs the Order, as he had intended*; and accordingly we ſee it ſubſiſt until this Day, tho' the Monks of it be ne're a whit better than others, who have been Suppreſt.

It would be matter of Aſtoniſhment to ſee ſo many Monaſteries and Convents ſuffer'd in *Italy*, full of a ſort of People, who being under a Vow of *Obedience*, take the full ſwing of their own Wills and Inclinations, who profeſſing *Poverty*, are more Pro-

Proprietors than Men of the World, and who having conſecrated their Virginity to God, live the moſt ſcandalous and debauch'd Lives that can be imagin'd; I ſay, this would be matter of Aſtoniſhment, but that it is notorious, *That Gold is more powerful at* Rome, *than God himſelf.* Can any thing be conceiv'd more Infamous and Licentious, than the Lives of *Monks?* He that doubts of it, needs only to go to *Rome*, *Venice*, or other principal Cities of *Italy*, at *Shrovetide*, where he ſhall meet with nothing in the Streets, but *Monks* in Maſquerade, with their Whores; all the Theaters of *Comedies* and *Opera's*, and all places of publick Shews and Paſtime, are throng'd with them; yea, and they glory in theſe their Exceſſes, which ought to be the greateſt matter of Shame and Confuſion to them.

I have been acquainted with a vaſt Number of *Monks*, who at *Shrovetide* ſeeing me, would draw near to me, and take off their Vizards on purpoſe that I might take notice of them; they had each of them a Wench by the Hand, and the next Morning in the Sextry, before they went to the Altar to ſay Maſs, all their Diſcourſe was about the Debauches and Licentious Pranks they had plaid the Day before, and of thoſe they intended to play the ſame Day, after their Drudgery of Saying Maſs was over. I call to mind a Story one of theſe *Monks* on a time told me, which becauſe it contains ſome rare extraordinary Circumſtances, I think worthy of my communicating to you. The Hiſtory I am about to tell you hapned at *Venice*.

This

This *Monk* told me, that it was about Three Weeks ſince, that he had met with a very happy Adventure; which was, That as he was going one Evening to the Play-Houſe, he met with a Lady of Quality in Maſquerade, who (as far as he could gueſs from all Circumſtances) was a Noble *Venetian*; though at firſt, becauſe ſhe was alone, and becauſe ſhe rather Addreſt her ſelf to him, than he to her, he took her to be a Lady of Pleaſure; and in this perſuaſion he deſir'd her to go along with him to the Play-Houſe; the Lady very readily accepted his Offer, which being ended, he offer'd her his Service to lead her home; and ſhe who deſir'd nothing more, preſently made a ſign to the Men (that waited for her coming at the Water-ſide in her *Gondola*) to come and take her in. The *Monk* ſtept in with her, and ſpied at the farther-end of the Boat a Gentleman in Maſquerade, who received him with a great deal of Civility. The Lady fearing leſt the unlook'd-for Meeting with this Gentleman, might affright or diſcompoſe her New Galant, bid him, Not to fear any harm; and commanded the Boat-men, to pull away. It was about One of the Clock in the Morning when they entred the *Gondola*, and the Moon being in the Wane, and the Heavens all cover'd with Clouds, made that nothing could be diſcern'd by any Light from thence; and the Boat-Men made ſo many Turnings and Windings through the Canals of *Venice*, that it was impoſſible for him to diſcern in what part of the City he was. All that he could take Notice of was, That the *Gondola*

ſtopt

ſtopt at a back Gate of a ſtately Palace, whence immediately many Vizarded Lackeys came forth with Flambeaus to Light them in. He was conducted by a Private pair of Stairs into a ſpacious Dining-Room, where he likewiſe met with ſeveral Perſons with Vizards. The *Monk*, tho' he was a perſon of great Confidence and Reſolution, confeſt to me, That he was ſeiz'd with an extream Terrour which receiv'd a conſiderable addition, after the Lady was withdrawn, and he ſaw himſelf left all alone with the Gentleman, and ſome of his Domeſticks, all Mask'd; for, as he aſſur'd me, he expected nothing leſs than Death. But the Gentleman, on the other hand, us'd his utmoſt endeavours to aſſure and rid him of his Fears. Soon after the Table was cover'd with a ſumptuous Collation, and he was ſerv'd with ſeveral ſorts of the choiceſt Wines. After which he was ſhewed to a rich Bed, where he was bid to *Lie down*. The *Monk* ſeeing there would be danger for him, not to comply readily with every thing they would have him to do, gave a ready Obedience to all their Orders. He was no ſooner got into Bed, but the Fire and all the Tapers in the Room were put out, and immediately after the Lady entred, and came to Bed to him, giving him a Thouſand Aſſurances, that not the leaſt hurt ſhould happen to him, and therefore wiſhing him to diſcard all Fear. He was thus kept and ſerv'd for a Fortnight together, in the manner as I have juſt now related, without ever being able to diſcover where he was, or who any of the Perſons were, that accompanied him, or waited on him. All that

he

he could gueſs from the Ladies Diſcourſe was, *That becauſe ſhe could have no Children by her Husband, he had conſented to avenge himſelf of ſome of his Neareſt Relations, to whom he was unwilling to leave his Eſtate after his Death, that ſhe might find out ſome Expedient to have an Heir; and that they had not judg'd any way more proper for their Deſign, than to make uſe of a young and handſom* Monk, *as he was, to obtain their Deſire.* Thus after many Civilities receiv'd, and very kind and great Entertainment (but withal, after having committed a great Sin) he was ſent away with the Preſent of about Fifty *Guinea's* value in Gold; and having in a dark Night put him into a *Gondola*, after many Turnings and Windings, they Landed him near the place, where they had taken him in; neither was it poſſible for him ever after to make any further diſcovery about this Matter. He himſelf related to me this Adventure with ſuch a Tranſport of Joy, (and this too, when he was upon the point of going up to the Altar to ſay Maſs) as made it evident, he would have been extreamly ſatisfied, to find himſelf again in the ſame Circumſtances.

I have heard of another *Monk*, who (in a much like caſe) met with a very different Succeſs; for having been brought by a Lady of Quality into her Houſe, during her Husbands abſence, and probably with the ſame deſign of providing him an Heir; but by Miſhap for him, her Husband being unexpectedly return'd, ſurpriz'd the good Fryer, and took him Napping; and having kept him a cloſe Priſoner in a Chamber for about a Fortnight, till

a certain Holiday, on which a General Proceſſion was to be celebrated; which the Gentleman knew was to paſs by his Door; as the *Proceſſion* was approaching, he caus'd his Priſoner to be ſtript ſtark Naked, and after he had been ſoundly Slaſht by four of his Lackeys, juſt at the midſt of the Proceſſion, as the Fathers *Carmelites* paſs'd by, of whoſe Order this Fryer was, he turn'd him out of Door ſtark Naked, with a Written Paper on his Back, ſpecifying his Crime, and forc'd him thus to run through the *Proceſſion*. This gave a very great Offence, and the Fathers *Carmelites*, who found themſelves moſt outragiouſly Affronted thereby, went and complain'd to the Inquiſition, pretending that the Gentleman, who had thus horribly expos'd one of their Brotherhood, could be no other than an Heretick, and a ſworn Enemy to all Religious Orders, whom he had ſo outragiouſly abus'd in the Perſon of their Brother; but however, notwithſtanding all their Rage, the Honeſt Man made a ſhift to defend and juſtifie his Proceeding againſt the Diabolical Malice of theſe Monks.

I could furniſh you here with an infinite number of curious Stories, concerning the Amours and Intriegues of *Monks* and *Prieſts*, if I were not perſuaded, That it is the Duty of every Honeſt Man, not to ſpeak, but with great Moderation of a Vice, whereof the Diſcovery is equally dangerous, to him that makes it, and to thoſe to whom it is made. And therefore ſhall only tell you, that I may cut ſhort here, That I never in my life convers'd with any one *Monk* or *Prieſt* of the Church of *Rome*, for

for ſo long a time as was ſufficient to penetrate a little into their Manners and Courſe of Life; but that I found at laſt, that they had ſecret Commerce with Women; or, which is worſe, and what I would not willingly name, *viz.* That they were addicted to the abominable Sin of *Sodomy*. And yet many of thoſe were meer Saints to outward appearance, all their Diſcourſe was of the *Bleſſed Virgin*, and of *Purgatory*; and the only Reaſon why I deſir'd their Friendſhip, was becauſe at firſt I took them to be very good and honeſt Men; but ſometime after I found to my great Regret, that I had been deceived by my too favourable Opinion of them.

I was acquainted (during my ſtay at *Venice*) with one of them, that was the Steward of a Religious Houſe. He was a Man of the moſt promiſing Phyſiognomy that could be; and I was much edified to ſee how Modeſt and Humble he was in his Garb and Behaviour. For, whereas moſt of the *Monks* of *Italy* wear curious ſhining Stuffs, fine Hats, Silk Stockens, and neat Shoes, he had nothing about him but what was very plain and ſimple: He wore a great old Hat, with a brim of a Foot and an half broad, which flap'd down over his Ears, with a great *Pater Noſter* of Wood hanging down from his Girdle; and beſides this, had an Air and Port that breath'd nothing but Devotion; and his Maſſes, which others have found a way to expedit in leſs than a Quarter of an Hour, always laſted an Hour and an Half. He was alſo a great Lover of Books, as

being of ſome competent Learning. Theſe good Qualities I obſerved in him, joyn'd with ſome others that he poſſeſs'd, and the good Report he had every where, tho' indeed acquir'd by his Hypocriſie, were the Motives that engag'd me, to endeavour an Acquaintance with him; and I look'd upon my ſelf as very happy, in meeting with a great deal of Facility in the executing of this my Deſign. During a Seventh Months Converſation I had with him, I perceived nothing by him but what was good and honeſt: Yea, he ſeem'd to have ſomething of a Spirit of *Prophecy*; for what he had publickly foretold of the Raiſing of the Siege of *Vienna*, and of the total Defeat of the *Turkiſh* Army, very particularly came to paſs. It had been happy for him, could he as well have foreſeen the ill Conſequences, which the licentious and flagitious Life he led in Secret, would draw down upon him, in order to have prevented them. This good *Monk* (for ſo he was as to all outward appearance, and whom I look'd upon as a Man come from Heaven) was oblig'd by a troubleſom Accident that hapned to him, to diſcover to me all his Wicked Life: A Lewd Woman, whom he had kept for ſeveral years, was reſolv'd at laſt to ruin his Reputation; She being perfectly well acquainted, how great a Lover this Hypocritical *Monk* was of Vain-glory, ſhe had already for ſome Months threatned to expoſe him in his own Colours to the World, in caſe he did not furniſh her with the Sum of Mony ſhe demanded of him. She had already, by theſe her Menaces, drawn from him at twice an 100 Crowns,

and

and was now come for the Third time, to demand the like Sum, neither would he have mended himſelf a whit, by complying with her Demand, becauſe ſhe would not have fail'd within a Fortnight after to come with the ſame Threats, *viz. That ſhe was reſov'd to declare in preſence of the Prior of the Convent, and all the Religious, That he (through whoſe hands all the Mony of the Convent paſſed) had not only raviſh'd her Daughter; but alſo abuſed one of her Boys, in the moſt abominable manner imaginable.* The *Monk* own'd, that he had to do with the one, and the other, and the Mother too; but that he had not been the firſt; foraſmuch as long before his Acquaintance with them, they had been Proſtitutes, and that beſides they had been well paid for it: That in the mean time, to put ſome ſtop to her Impudence, he deſir'd me, to go and warn her ſeriouſly, *That if ſhe would not be ſatisfied with the Mony he had already given her, he was reſolv'd to get her Murther'd.* I was ſo far from offering him my Service in this Affair, that from that time forwards I conceiv'd the greateſt horrour and averſion for him, and took a firm Reſolution never to ſee him more. However, I had the Curioſity, before I took my laſt leave of him, to ask him, What was the Reaſon why he went ſo ſtrangely Dreſt, and ſuch a ſlouching Hat hanging over his Ears; he who took ſuch great pleaſure in Courting of Women? He told me, That he had found the Habit he wore very advantagious and uſeful to him, that being an Officer of the Monaſtery, when he went to receive any Rents,

the Perſons concern'd had the greater Reſpect for him; and beſides this, That it was alſo very beneficial to fill his own Purſe, which he ſhewed me how. *For as our Monaſteries* (ſaid he) *are never without Suits at Law, every one knows what is the ſet price of an* Aſſignation, *a* Warrant, *a* Contract, *an* Acquittance, *and an hundred other Formalities us'd in Law. It is ſufficient when I give in my Accounts, that I have made uſe of ſo many* Aſſignations, Conſultations, Acquittances, &c. *which do amount to ſuch a Sum: All or moſt of which is my Profit; for ſometimes I have disburs'd nothing at all for them. I go to the Lawyers, the Attorny, and Notary with my great Slouching-Hat, and in a pitiful Whining-tone I repreſent, to the utmoſt of my power, the extream Poverty of our Monaſtery, and that ſo effectually, as often to move them to compaſſion; and ſo they either take no Mony at all of me, or elſe content themſelves with a very little: So that the Mony of theſe Formalities of Law comes moſt into my Pocket, neither am I oblig'd to give any account thereof to my Superiours, as being the fruit and product of my own Induſtry. Whereas* (ſaid he) *ſhould I preſent my ſelf to theſe Men of the Law with a little Hat, and a neat Habit, they would preſently twit me with a,* See here a Company of good Fat *Monks*, who live at eaſe and pleaſure, and have wherewith to pay well, and ſo they ſhall; *and accordingly would make me pay for all theſe Writings to the utmoſt Rigour. And as for Women* (ſaid he) *I am always aſſur'd, That tho' my Perſon may not pleaſe them, yet my Mony will;*

and

and that as long as I am ſtor'd with that, I ſhall never fail of being Welcom to them.

This Diſcourſe made me conceive, That all thoſe great flapping Hats, thoſe old and Thred-bare Cowls, the long Beards of the *Capuchins*, and the high Collars of the *Jeſuits*, are no certain Proofs (as ſome ſuppoſe) that thoſe who wear them are good and honeſt Men. The knowledge alſo I have had of their Diſorders, has powerfully convinced me, that the Sin of *Uncleanneſs* is that which reigns moſt abſolutely, and without controul amongſt them; and that of all theſe Vowers of *Chaſtity*, there are but a very few, and may be, none at all that obſerve it indeed and in truth; for God will never afford his Bleſſing to fooliſh Confidences, or Raſh Vows.

From all that has been ſaid, it will not be difficult to conceive, how the *Roman* Clergy can make away with thoſe vaſt Revenues they are poſſeſſed of, this Sin of the *Fleſh* being one of thoſe Vices that requires great Expences to maintain it. True it is, that *Prieſts* and *Monks* are not all of them equally Rich; for there be ſome of them, that have neither Benefices nor Penſions, and who conſequently are not in a condition to ſpend as high as others, who yet ſpend proportionably to their Incoms. I have known ſome of them who had nothing to live upon, but the Mony they receiv'd for their *Maſſes*, who did almoſt ſtarve themſelves with Hunger, to ſpare ſomething to enable them to Viſit a Whore-Houſe once a Fortnight, or at the leaſt once a Month.

There are others of them who have ſuch baſe and mean Souls, that they learn Handicrafts, and exerciſe them in private, to gain ſome Mony: Yea, there be not wanting ſome of them who learn to make Womens Cloaths; as, *Mantoe's*, *Stays*, and *Petticoats*; that by this means they may have an occaſion of freer acceſs to them; ſome of them profeſs the Art of *Fortune-Telling*; and ſome are downright *Negromancers*. Laſtly, there be others who are not only baſe and mean, but alſo Sacrilegious; for tho' (according to their Principles) to celebrate more *Maſſes* than one a day, be one of the greateſt Profanations a man can be guilty of, yet theſe *Prieſts* and *Monks*, who ſacrifice all that is Sacred and Holy to their own Intereſt, do eaſily get over this difficulty, and ſay ſometimes three or four *Maſſes* a day in ſeveral places.

Once on a Holiday I heard Maſs ſaid very early in the Morning in the Church of S. *Mark* at *Venice*, by a poor Prieſt of my Acquaintance; and having occaſion the ſame Morning to go to *Muran*, which is but a little League diſtant from *Venice*, as I paſt through a Church, I ſaw the ſame Prieſt celebrating another *Maſs*. About Two Hours after I was oblig'd to go to a place call'd *la Judeka*, and there I again found the ſame Prieſt ſaying *Maſs* in a Convent of *Nuns*. This Prieſt turning himſelf to the People at *Dominus vobiſcum*, perceiv'd me, and knowing he was diſcover'd, he became ſeiz'd with ſuch an exceſſive Fear and Reſtleſneſs, during the reſt of the *Maſs*, that he ſcarcely knew or minded what he ſaid; he left out ſome of

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the accuſtomed Collects and Benedictions, and after he had conſecrated the Cup, he forgat to lift it up on high, for the People to worſhip it, according to Cuſtom. As ſoon as he had made an end of Saying *Maſs*, he put off his Habit with an extraordinary precipitancy, and taking his Hat and Cloak, ran away without ever demanding his Mony for the *Maſs* he had ſaid. I could eaſily have caus'd him to be ſeiz'd; but knowing it to be a matter belonging to the Inquiſition, and having never had any liking for that Tribunal, I would not concern my ſelf with it. Beſides, I knew that he was not the only Man, that was guilty of this Fault, but that many others committed the ſame every day. My Pen is weary of ſetting down all thoſe infamous and ſcandalous Actions; but yet, becauſe there is no Evil from whence ſome great Good may not be drawn, I heartily wiſh, Sir, that from what I have here written, as well as in all my other LETTERS, you may at leaſt derive this Benefit, to be convinc'd, That the firſt Argument which put me upon Writing theſe LETTERS, and upon which you rely ſo much for your confirmation in the *Romiſh* Religion, is a very poor, weak, and dangerous one; viz. *That it is not poſſible, that ſuch a great number of* Monks *and* Prieſts, *who ſit at the Helm of your Church, ſhould be all of them in an Error, and conſequently, that they may be very ſafely rely'd upon.* This is one of thoſe Arguments we call *Circulus Vitioſus*, a *Vicious* or *Faulty Circle.* The *Seculars* repoſe themſelves in matters of Faith upon the *Prieſts* and *Monks*; and if we divide the *Prieſts*

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and *Monks*, as they divide them at *Rome*; *viz.* into *Prieſts* on this ſide, and on the other ſide the *Alpes*; we find that the latter rely on the former, who are *Italians*; and theſe again repoſe themſelves wholly on thoſe at *Rome*, that is, upon that number of Eccleſiaſticks that are about the Pope, and who in their Opinion paſs for very great Doctors. Now theſe again on the other hand, do not rely ſo much upon their own Science or Learning, which they know to be very mean, as upon the great number of *Prieſts* and *Seculars*, who believe them. This made one of their great Preachers declare from the Pulpit; *That it was an invincible Argument to prove the Truth of* Tranſubſtantiation, *becauſe there was ſuch a vaſt number of thoſe who believed, in compariſon of the inconſiderable Number that deny'd it*: That *their* Catholicks *being twenty to one, were to be accounted as the ſtrongeſt, ſo the trueſt.*

I ſhall not employ my time here to ſhew, how weak and frivolous thoſe Arguments are, that are drawn either from the Number, or Dignity of the Perſons that profeſs it. It ſhall ſuffice me, that I have expoſed to your View the diſcovery I have made of the Unfaithfulneſs and Falſneſs of your Paſtors, and how much it is their outward Intereſt to abuſe you, and to deceive themſelves whilſt they impoſe upon you. For as they are well-pleaſed to be made uſe of by the *Multitude*, as an Argument to enforce their Belief; ſo God ſuffers them to make the ſame *Multitude*, an Argument to confirm their own Belief. If one Blind man leads another, they

muſt

muſt *both of them fall into the Ditch*; and if one leads Twenty, they muſt ſtill undergo the ſame Fate. 'Tis a much ſurer way for us to rely upon ſomething we know to be fixt and ſolid, (ſuch as we know the Scriptures to be, and to endeavour to penetrate the true Senſe thereof,) than to repoſe ones Confidence upon Men, who being blinded by their Intereſts, or Paſſion, may afterwards blind and deceive us alſo for Company.

I ſhall conclude this account of my Journey, or rather the Remarks I have made during my ſtay in *Italy*, with the recital of ſome ſmall Circumſtances which deſerve to be taken notice of. From *Milan* I took my Journy towards the Lake *de Como*, where I Embarked to go to the *Valtelline*; and from thence I again paſt over the Mountain *Splug*, where (in my way) I gave a Viſit to the Curate of *Campodolcino*, my old Acquaintance, who was a Doctor of *Milan*. He was much ſurpriz'd to ſee me there again, and eſpecially when he underſtood by me, That my intention was to take another Journy through the Country of the *Griſons* into *Switzerland*. He adviſed me very ſeriouſly to beware of the *Hereticks*, and to converſe with them as little and as cautiouſly as might be. I told him, It would be a very difficult Task to avoid their converſation in a Country, where they are every where mix'd with the *Catholicks*, or ſo much as to know and diſcern them. Whereupon he told me, That I might eaſily diſcern them by their manner of Diſcourſe; *For* (ſaith he) *you ſhall not be a quarter of an Hour in any of their Company, but you ſhall*

ſhall hear ſome of theſe Words coming from them, The Purity of the Goſpel; the Liberty of the Children of God; the Written Truth; the Teſtament of Jeſus Chriſt, *and other like Expreſſions, tending to exalt the Holy Scripture above the Authority of the See of* Rome. But this Notion the Doctor gave me of the *Proteſtants*, was ſo far from giving me an undervaluing Conceit of them, that on the contrary, I took notice of ſomething very pleaſing and excellent in it, and which rendred them the more amiable in my Eyes.

And as I was paſſing over the *Alpes*, meditating on the deſcription the Doctor had given me of the *Proteſtants*, I conceiv'd, That what was objected to them as a Crime, might very well be look'd upon as an Apology for them. Whilſt my Mind was taken up with thoſe Thoughts, I perceiv'd afar off a Company of Little Children, who came Running towards me from a little Hamlet, upon the Mountain, to Beg an Alms of me: I obſerv'd, that theſe Children beg'd only in the Name of *God*, and for the *Love of Jeſus Chriſt*, by which I knew them to be *Proteſtants*. And tho' I was not then ſo well ſtor'd with Mony to be liberal to them; yet they were very thankful for the Little I gave them, and return'd peaceably to the Village, having firſt beſtow'd a Thouſand Bleſſings upon me. As I Travell'd forwards, and was coming down the Mountain, I met with another ſmall Hamlet, from whence alſo came forth a Company of Children upon the ſame deſign as the former; but their Form of Begging was very different, for they entreated my

my Charity for the *Love of the Bleſſed Virgin*, of S. *Anthony* of *Padua*, and the *Souls of Purgatory*. Neither were they contented with the ſmall Gift I had beſtow'd upon the other Children, but followed me with great Importunity above a quarter of a League, repeating a great Number of *Ave Maries*, and *Prayers for the Dead*; and after all, ſeeing they could get no more of me, they chang'd their Prayers into a Thouſand Curſes, and took up Stones, which they flung at me. I perceiv'd by this Action, that theſe Little Catholicks were not ſo well Taught and Educated as the Children of Proteſtants; and that the Doctrin inſtill'd into them, did not produce ſo good Fruit, as the Purity of the Goſpel did in the others. In this manner I continued my Journy through the Country of the *Griſons*, and of the *Swiſſes*; and without tying my ſelf to obſerve the Advice of the Curate of *Campodolcino*, I indifferently Convers'd with the *Proteſtants* and *Catholicks*.

I know it is a difficult thing for People of a different Religion (tho' living under the ſame Laws and Government, as the *Swiſſes* are) perfectly to love one another. However, I obſerv'd, That the *Papiſts* ſpake with a great deal more of Bitterneſs againſt the *Proteſtants*, than the Proteſtants did againſt them, tho' indeed theſe latter had much more Reaſon ſo to do; for it was at the time when the Perſecution was carried on againſt the *Proteſtants* with a great deal of Fury. I was very much edified with the Example of ſeveral *French Proteſtants*, fled into *Switzerland*, who were ſo far from complaining

plaining of the Miſeries they had ſuffer'd, that they exhorted one another, (with Words of Holy Scripture) to bear patiently thoſe further Sufferings their Exile might expoſe them to. Neither could they endure to hear others ſpeak ill of their Perſecutors, and teſtified themſelves to deſire nothing more, than that it would pleaſe God to Pardon and Convert them. There was an old Gentleman, who in my hearing with a great deal of Charity reprov'd a young *French* Souldier for being tranſported in Paſſion againſt the *French* King; asking him, *Whether the Reading of the Holy Bible had taught him ſo to do?* The Young man was daſh'd with this Check, and deſired him, to excuſe a Fault he had committed, by the Regret he had, to ſee himſelf reduc'd to the condition of a Souldiers Life for a poor Subſiſtence, after having loſt all his Eſtate in *France*.

When I was in *Switzerland*, and ſo near to *Geneva*, I reſolv'd to ſpend Three or Four Days there. I was Lodg'd at the Houſe of a good Widow, who was a very Zealous Proteſtant, and by this occaſion found my ſelf many times engag'd, to diſpute about Matters of Religion: And foraſmuch as I was then maintaining a Weak Cauſe, I found the Arguments put to me to be very ſtrong; and tho' I did not immediately give up the Cudgels, yet thoſe I diſcours'd with, took notice of the Moderation wherewith I gave in my Anſwers; which made one of the Miniſters who was then preſent, ſay, *That it were greatly to be wiſh'd, that all the Prieſts of* Rome *had the ſame command of their Spirits; becauſe by this means* Truth *would have*

have the better Opptunity of diſcovering her ſelf unto them; but that commonly by their Paſſionateneſs, and their ſcornful and injurious Expreſſions, they broke off all Diſputes, as ſoon as they found themſelves pinch'd with the Evidence of Truth. The Truth is, they behaved themſelves towards me with a great deal of Kindneſs and Civility; and after the Diſpute was over, a Fine Collation was Dreſt up, to which they Invited me, deſiring only of me (by a kind of ſecret Reproach, which did not diſpleaſe me, becauſe I knew it to be Juſt) that I would be pleas'd to make this Reflection upon their Carriage, That their Spirit was not like that of the Papiſts: *For* (ſaid they) Sir, *you know very well, that if we had Diſputed as much either in* France *or* Italy, *to maintain our Faith, as you have done here to defend yours, we ſhould have been abus'd, Clapt up into Priſon, yea, and Burnt alive; but as for us, we are ſo far from having any recourſe to ſuch barbarous and horrid Means, that we do not ſo much as upon that account think the worſe of you; neither ſhall you perceive any thing from us, but the kindeſt Entertainment we are able to afford you.* I cannot but own, that I found in this their Behaviour ſomething of that Spirit of *Beneficence* and *Sweetneſs*, wherewith *Jeſus Chriſt*, and his firſt Preachers of the Faith, did Convert ſuch Crowds of Infidels and Sinners. The Idea whereof has been ever ſince impreſt on my Mind, and put me upon applying my ſelf to the Reading of the Writings of *Proteſtants*, and to weigh their Reaſons with a more unbiaſs'd Temper;

per; and having found them Solid, and founded on the Word of God and the Practice of the Reformed Churches, conform to those of the first Ages of the Church, God had been pleas'd to give me his Grace, to dispose my Will to embrace it, by abjuring all the Errors of the Church of *Rome*, which I have, and utterly do renounce from all my heart, and wish you (in Christian Charity) the same Happiness, as being,

SIR,

Your most Affectionate, &c.

FINIS.